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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOL. XXV

NEW LETTERS

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

At the age of 20

From a photograph by Moffat of Edinburgh

Novels and tales.

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LETTERS AND MISCELLANIES OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

NEW LETTERS ❧ ❧

SELECTED AND EDITED
BY SIDNEY COLVIN ❧ ❧

PUBLISHED IN ❧
NEW YORK BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S
SONS ❧ ❧ 1920 ❧

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN this volume are contained one hundred and sixty-two letters not until now published in the Thistle Edition and only recently given to the public in any form. Of them Sir Sidney Colvin said, in the introduction to a selection from them for magazine publication:

"They date from all periods of Stevenson's life, those written in the brilliant and troubled days of his youth predominating, and giving a picture, perhaps unique in its kind, of a character and talent in the making. Many of the letters now printed were put aside twelve years ago simply for want of space. Lapse of time has enabled some to be given now that could not discreetly have been given then; some are addressed to correspondents who have only lately placed them at my disposal. Much, of course, remains and ought to remain unprinted. Some of the outpourings of the early time are too sacred and intimate for publicity; many of the letters of his maturer years are dry business letters of no general interest; many others are mere scraps tossed in jest to his familiars and full of the catch-words and code-words current in their talk, but of little meaning to outsiders. Above all, many have to be omitted because they deal with the intimate affairs of private persons. . . . As to the text, it will be faithful to the original except in so far as I have used the editorial privilege of omission when I thought it desirable, and as I have not felt myself bound to reproduce slips and oddities, however characteristic, of spelling.''

For the convenience of readers in following Stevenson's correspondence in connection with the letters already published in the Thistle Edition, this latest volume has been separated according to the dates of the letters into the same divisions—''Student Days,'' ''Advocate and Author,'' ''The Amateur Emigrant,'' and so on—that were made in the earlier books. The letters ''To Sidney Colvin'' from Stevenson's Samoan home would by the original arrangement have been included in the collection entitled *Vailima Letters*. Their position among those letters can easily be determined by the chronological sequence.

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STUDENT DAYS AT EDINBURGH

TRAVELS AND EXCURSIONS

(1868-1873)

I

STUDENT DAYS AT EDINBURGH

TRAVELS AND EXCURSIONS

(1868–1873)

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

1868
ÆT. 17

In July, 1868, R. L. S. went to watch the harbour works at Anstruther and afterwards those at Wick. Of his private moods and occupations in the Anstruther days he has told in retrospect in the essay *Random Memories: the Coast of Fife.* Here are some passages from letters written at the time to his parents:

First Sheet: Thursday.
Second Sheet: Friday.

'KENZIE HOUSE OR WHATEVER IT IS CALLED,
ANSTRUTHER [*July, 1868*].

MY DEAR FATHER,—My lodgings are very nice, and I don't think there are any children. There is a box of mignonette in the window and a factory of dried rose-leaves, which make the atmosphere a trifle heavy, but very pleasant.

When you come, bring also my paint-box—I forgot it. I am going to try the travellers and jennies, and have made a sketch of them and begun the drawing. After that I 'll do the staging.

Mrs. Brown "has suffered herself from her stommick, and that makes her kind of think for other people." She

1868 ÆT. 17 is a motherly lot. Her mothering and thought for others displays itself in advice against hard-boiled eggs, well-done meat, and late dinners, these being my only requests. Fancy—I am the only person in Anstruther who dines in the afternoon.

If you could bring me some wine when you come, 't would be a good move: I fear *vin d'Anstruther;* and having procured myself a severe attack of gripes by two days' total abstinence on chilly table beer, I have been forced to purchase Green Ginger ("'Somebody or other's 'celebrated'"), for the benefit of my stomach, like St. Paul.

There is little or nothing doing here to be seen. By heightening the corner in a hurry to support the staging they have let the masons get ahead of the divers and wait till they can overtake them. I wish you would write and put me up to the sort of things to ask and find out. I received your registered letter with the £5; it will last for ever. To-morrow I will watch the masons at the pier-foot and see how long they take to work that Fife-ness stone you ask about; they get sixpence an hour; so that is the only datum required.

It is awful how slowly I draw, and how ill: I am not nearly done with the travellers, and have not thought of the jennies yet. When I 'm drawing, I find out something I have not measured, or having measured, have not noted, or, having noted, cannot find; and so I have to trudge to the pier again ere I can go farther with my noble design.

I haven't *seen* fruit since I left.

Love to all.—Your affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

1868
ÆT. 17

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

'KENZIE HOUSE, ANSTRUTHER
[*later in July, 1868*].

MY DEAR MOTHER,—To-night I went with the youngest M. to see a strolling band of players in the townhall. A large table placed below the gallery with a print curtain on either side of the most limited dimensions was at once the scenery and the proscenium. The manager told us that his scenes were sixteen by sixty-four, and so could not be got in. Though I knew, or at least felt sure, that there were no such scenes in the poor man's possession, I could not laugh, as did the major part of the audience, at this shift to escape criticism. We saw a wretched farce, and some comic songs were sung. The manager sang one, but it came grimly from his throat. The whole receipt of the evening was 5*s*. and 3*d*., out of which had to come room, gas, and town drummer. We left soon; and I must say came out as sad as I have been for ever so long: I think that manager had a soul above comic songs. I said this to young M., who is a "Phillistine" (Matthew Arnold's Philistine you understand), and he replied, "How much happier he would be as a common workingman!" I told him I thought he would be less happy earning a comfortable living as a shoemaker than he was starving as an actor, with such artistic work as he had to do. But the Phillistine wouldn't see it. You observe that I spell Philistine time about with one and two l's.

As we went home we heard singing, and went into the porch of the schoolhouse to listen. A fisherman entered and told us to go in. It was a psalmody class. One of

1870 ÆT. 19 the girls had a glorious voice. We stayed for half an hour.

Tuesday.—I am utterly sick of this grey, grim, sea-beaten hole. I have a little cold in my head, which makes my eyes sore; and you can't tell how utterly sick I am, and how anxious to get back among trees and flowers and something less meaningless than this bleak fertility.

Papa need not imagine that I have a bad cold or am stone-blind from this description, which is the whole truth.

Last night Mr. and Mrs. Fortune called in a dogcart, Fortune's beard and Mrs. F.'s brow glittering with mist-drops, to ask me to come next Saturday. Conditionally, I accepted. Do you think I can cut it? I am only anxious to go slick home on the Saturday. Write by return of post and tell me what to do. If possible, I should like to cut the business and come right slick out to Swanston.—I remain, your affectionate son, R. L. STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

I omit the letters of 1869, which describe at great length, and not very interestingly, a summer trip on board the lighthouse steamer to the Orkneys, Shetlands, and the Fair Isle. The following of 1870 I give (by consent of the lady who figures as a youthful character in the narrative) both for the sake of its lively social sketches—including that of the able painter and singular personage, the late Sam Bough,—and because it is dated from the Isle of Earraid, celebrated alike in *Kidnapped* and in the essay *Memoirs of an Islet.*

EARRAID, *Thursday, August 5th, 1870.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have so much to say, that needs must I take a large sheet; for the notepaper brings with it a chilling brevity of style. Indeed, I think pleasant writing is proportional to the size of the material you write withal.

From Edinburgh to Greenock, I had the ex-secretary of the E.U. Conservative Club, Murdoch. At Greenock I spent a dismal evening, though I found a pretty walk. Next day on board the *Iona*, I had Maggie Thomson to Tarbet; Craig, a well-read, pleasant medical, to Ardrishaig; and Professor, Mrs., and all the little Fleeming Jenkinseses to Oban.

At Oban, that night, it was delicious. Mr. Stephenson's yacht lay in the bay, and a splendid band on board played delightfully. The waters of the bay were as smooth as a mill-pond; and, in the dusk, the black shadows of the hills stretched across to our very feet and the lights were reflected in long lines. At intervals, blue lights were burned on the water: and rockets were sent up. Sometimes great stars of clear fire fell from them, until the bay received and quenched them. I hired a boat and skulled round the yacht in the dark. When I came in, a very pleasant Englishman on the steps fell into talk with me, till it was time to go to bed.

Next morning I slept on or I should have gone to Glencoe. As it was, it was blazing hot; so I hired a boat, pulled all forenoon along the coast and had a delicious bathe on the beautiful white beach. Coming home, I *cotogaï'd* my Englishman, lunched alongside of him and his sister, and took a walk with him in the afternoon, during which I find that he was travelling with a servant, kept horses, *et cetera*. At dinner he wished me to sit beside him and his sister; but there was no room. When he came out he told me why he was so *empressé* on this point. He had found out my name, and that I was con-

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ÆT. 19

nected with lighthouses, and his sister wished to know if I were any relative of the Stevenson in Ballantyne's *Lighthouse*. All evening, he, his sister, I, and Mr. Hargrove, of Hargrove and Fowler, sate in front of the hotel. I asked Mr. H. if he knew who my friend was. "Yes," he said; "I never met him before: but my partner knows him. He is a man of old family; and the solicitor of highest standing about Sheffield." At night, he said, "Now if you 're down in my neighbourhood, you must pay me a visit. I am very fond of young men about me; and I should like a visit from you very much. I can take you through any factory in Sheffield and I 'll drive you all about the *Dookeries*." He then wrote me down his address; and we parted huge friends, he still keeping me up to visiting him.

Hitherto, I had enjoyed myself amazingly; but to-day has been the crown. In the morning I met Bough on board, with whom I am both surprised and delighted. He and I have read the same books, and discuss Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Fletcher, Webster, and all the old authors. He can quote verses by the page, and has really a very pretty literary taste. Altogether, with all his roughness and buffoonery, a more pleasant, clever fellow you may seldom see. I was very much surprised with him; and he with me. "Where the devil did you read all these books?" says he; and in my heart, I echo the question. One amusing thing I must say. We were both talking about travelling; and I said I was so fond of travelling alone, from the people one met and grew friendly with. "Ah," says he, "but you 've such a pleasant manner, you know—quite captivated my old woman, you did—she couldn't talk of anything else." Here was a compliment, even in Sam Bough's sneering tones, that rather tickled my vanity; and really, my social successes of the last few days, the best of which is yet to come, are enough to turn anybody's head. To continue, after a little go in with Samuel, he going up on the bridge, I looked about me to see who there was; and mine eye lighted on two girls, one of whom was sweet and pretty, talking to an old gentleman. "*Eh bien,*" says I to myself, "that seems the best investment on board." So I sidled up to the old gentleman, got into conversation with him and so with the damsel; and thereupon, having used the patriarch as a ladder, I kicked him down behind me. Who should my damsel prove, but Amy Sinclair, daughter of Sir Tollemache. She certainly was the simplest, most naïve specimen of girlhood ever I saw. By getting brandy and biscuit and generally coaching up her cousin, who was sick, I ingratiated myself; and so kept her the whole way to Iona, taking her into the cave at Staffa and generally making myself as gallant as possible. I was never so much pleased with anything in my life, as her amusing absence of *mauvaise honte:* she was so sorry I wasn't going on to Oban again: didn't know how she could have enjoyed herself if I hadn't been there; and was so sorry we hadn't met on the *Crinan*. When we came back from Staffa, she and her aunt went down to have lunch; and a minute after up comes Miss Amy to ask me if I wouldn't think better of it, and take some lunch with them. I couldn't resist that, of course, so down I went; and there she displayed the full extent of her innocence. I must be sure to come to Thurso Castle the next time I was in Caithness, and Upper Norwood (whence she would take me all over the Crystal Palace) when I was near London;

1870 ÆT. 19 and (most complete of all) she offered to call on us in Edinburgh! Wasn't it delicious?—she is a girl of sixteen or seventeen, too, and the latter I think. I never yet saw a girl so innocent and fresh, so perfectly modest without the least trace of prudery.

Coming off Staffa, Sam Bough, who had been in huge force the whole time, drawing in Miss Amy's sketch-book and making himself agreeable or otherwise to everybody, pointed me out to a parson and said, "That 's him." This was Alexander Ross and his wife.

The last stage of the steamer now approached, Miss Amy and I lamenting pathetically that Iona was so near. "People meet in this way," quoth she, "and then lose sight of one another so soon." We all landed together, Bough and I and the Rosses with our baggage; and went together over the ruins. I was here left with the cousin and the aunt, during which I learned that said cousin sees me *every Sunday* in St. Stephen's. Oho! thought I, at the "every." The aunt was very anxious to know who that strange, wild man was (didn't I wish Samuel in Tophet!). Of course, in reply, I drew it strong about eccentric genius and my never having known him before, and a good deal that was perhaps "strained to the extremest limit of the fact."

The steamer left, and Miss Amy and her cousin waved their handkerchiefs, until my arm in answering them was nearly broken. I believe women's arms must be better made for this exercise: mine ache still; and I regretted at the time that the handkerchief had seen service. Altogether, however, I was left in a pleasant frame of mind.

Being thus left alone, Bough, I, the Rosses, Professor

Blackie, and an Englishman called M———, these people were going to remain the night, except the Professor, who is resident there at present. They were going to dine *en compagnie* and wished us to join the party; but we had already committed ourselves by mistake to the wrong hotel, and besides, we wished to be off as soon as wind and time were against us to Earraid. We went up; Bough selected a place for sketching and blocked in the sketch for Mrs. R.; and we all talked together. Bough told us his family history and a lot of strange things about old Cumberland life; among others, how he had known "John Peel" of pleasant memory in song, and of how that worthy hunted. At five, down we go to the Argyll Hotel, and wait dinner. Broth—"nice broth"—fresh herrings, and fowl had been promised. At 5.50, I get the shovel and tongs and drum them at the stair-head till a response comes from below that the nice broth is at hand. I boast of my engineering, and Bough compares me to the Abbott of Arbroath who originated the Inchcape Bell. At last, in comes the tureen and the hand-maid lifts the cover. "Rice soup!" I yell; "O no! none o' that for me!"—"Yes," says Bough savagely; "but Miss Amy didn't take *me* downstairs to eat salmon." Accordingly he is helped. How his face fell. "I imagine myself in the accident ward of the Infirmary," quoth he. It was, purely and simply, rice and water. After this, we have another weary pause, and then herrings in a state of mash and potatoes like iron. "Send the potatoes out to Prussia for grape-shot," was the suggestion. I dined off broken herrings and dry bread. At last "the supreme moment comes," and the fowl in a lordly dish is carried in. On the cover being raised, there is something so forlorn and miserable about the aspect of the animal that we

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ÆT. 19

both roar with laughter. Then Bough, taking up knife and fork, turns the "swarry" over and over, shaking doubtfully his head. "There 's an aspect of quiet resistance about the beggar," says he, "that looks bad." However, to work he falls until the sweat stands on his brow and a dismembered leg falls, dull and leaden-like, on to my dish. To eat it was simply impossible. I did not know before that flesh could be so tough. "The strongest jaws in England," says Bough piteously, harpooning his dry morsel, "couldn't eat this leg in less than twelve hours." Nothing for it now, but to order boat and bill. "That fowl," says Bough to the landlady, "is of a breed I know. I knew the cut of its jib whenever it was put down. That was the grandmother of the cock that frightened Peter."—"I thought it was a historical animal," says I. "What a shame to kill it. It 's as bad as eating Whittington's cat or the dog of Montargis."—"Na—na, it 's no so old," says the landlady, "but it eats hard."—"Eats!" I cry, "where do you find that? Very little of that verb with us." So with more raillery, we pay six shillings for our festival and run over to Earraid, shaking the dust of the Argyll Hotel from off our feet.

I can write no more just now, and I hope you will be able to decipher so much; for it contains matter. Really, the whole of yesterday's work would do in a novel without one little bit of embellishment; and, indeed, few novels are so amusing. Bough, Miss Amy, Mrs. Ross, Blackie, M———, the parson—all these were such distinct characters, the incidents were so entertaining, and the scenery so fine, that the whole would have made a novelist's fortune.

MY DEAR FATHER,—No landing to-day, as the sea runs high on the rock. They are at the second course of the first story on the rock. I have as yet had no time here; so this is *a* and *w* of my business news.—Your affectionate son, R. L. STEVENSON.

1872
ÆT. 21

TO CHARLES BAXTER

On the way home with Sir Walter Simpson from Germany. The L. J. R. herein mentioned was a short-lived Essay Club of only six members; its meetings were held in a public-house in Advocate's Close, and the exact meaning of its initials has never to this day been divulged to outsiders (see the *Life* of R. L. S. by Graham Balfour, p. 90, foot note).

BOULOGNE SUR MER,
Wednesday, 3rd or 4th September, 1872.

BLAME me not that this epistle
Is the first you have from me.
Idleness has held me fettered,
But at last the times are bettered
And once more I wet my whistle
Here, in France beside the sea.

All the green and idle weather
I have had in sun and shower
Such an easy warm subsistence,
Such an indolent existence
I should find it hard to sever
Day from day and hour from hour.

Many a tract-provided ranter
May upbraid me, dark and sour,

1872
ÆT. 21

Many a bland Utilitarian
Or excited Millenarian,
—"*Pereunt et imputantur*
You must speak to every hour."

But (the very term 's deceptive)
You at least, my friend, will see,
That in sunny grassy meadows
Trailed across by moving shadows
To be actively receptive
Is as much as man can be.

He that all the winter grapples
Difficulties, thrust and ward—
Needs to cheer him thro' his duty
Memories of sun and beauty
Orchards with the russet apples
Lying scattered on the sward.

Many such I keep in prison,
Keep them here at heart unseen,
Till my muse again rehearses
Long years hence, and in my verses
You shall meet them rearisen
Ever comely, ever green.

You know how they never perish,
How, in time of later art,
Memories consecrate and sweeten
These defaced and tempest-beaten
Flowers of former years we cherish,
Half a life, against our heart

Most, those love-fruits withered greenly,
Those frail, sickly amourettes,

How they brighten with the distance
Take new strength and new existence
Till we see them sitting queenly
Crowned and courted by regrets!

All that loveliest and best is,
Aureole-fashion round their head,
They that looked in life but plainly,
How they stir our spirits vainly
When they come to us Alcestis-
like returning from the dead!

Not the old love but another,
Bright she comes at Memory's call
Our forgotten vows reviving
To a newer, livelier living,
As the dead child to the mother
Seems the fairest child of all.

Thus our Goethe, sacred master,
Travelling backward thro' his youth,
Surely wandered wrong in trying
To renew the old, undying
Loves that cling in memory faster
Than they ever lived in truth.

So; *en voilà assez de mauvais vers.* Let us finish with a word or two in honest prose, tho' indeed I shall so soon be back again and, if you be in town as I hope, so soon get linked again down the Lothian road by a cigar or two and a liquor, that it is perhaps scarce worth the postage to send my letter on before me. I have just been long enough away to be satisfied and even anxious to get home

1872
ÆT. 21

again and talk the matter over with my friends. I shall have plenty to tell you; and principally plenty that I do not care to write; and I daresay, you, too, will have a lot of gossip. What about Ferrier? Is the L.J.R. think you to go naked and unashamed this winter? He with his charming idiosyncrasy was in my eyes the vine-leaf that preserved our self-respect. All the rest of us are such shadows, compared to his full-flavoured personality; but I must not spoil my own *dêbut*. I am trenching upon one of the essayettes which I propose to introduce, as a novelty, this year before that august assembly. For we must not let it die. It is a sickly baby, but what with nursing, and pap, and the like, I do not see why it should not have a stout manhood after all, and perhaps a green old age. Eh! when we are old (if we ever should be) that too will be one of those cherished memories I have been so rhapsodising over. We must consecrate our room. We must make it a museum of bright recollections; so that we may go back there white-headed and say "Vixi." After all, new countries, sun, music, and all the rest can never take down our gusty, rainy, smoky, grim old city out of the first place that it has been making for itself in the bottom of my soul, by all pleasant and hard things that have befallen me for these past twenty years or so. My heart is buried there — say, in Advocate's Close!

Simpson and I got on very well together, and made a very suitable pair. I like him much better than I did when I started which was almost more than I hoped for.

If you should chance to see Bob, give him my news or if you have the letter about you, let him see it.

Ever your Affct. friend,

R. L. STEVENSON.

1872
ÆT. 21

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Through the jesting tenor of this letter is to be discerned a vein of more than half-serious thinking very characteristic of R. L. S. alike as youth and man.

17 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH, *October, 1872.*

MY DEAR BAXTER,—I am gum-boiled and face swollen to an unprecedented degree. It is very depressing to suffer from gibber that cannot be brought to a head. I cannot speak it, because my face is so swollen and stiff that enunciation must be deliberate—a thing your true gibberer cannot hold up his head under; and writ gibber is somehow not gibber at all, it does not come forth, does not *flow,* with that fine irrational freedom that it loves in speech—it does not afford relief to the packed bosom.

Hence I am suffering from *suppressed gibber*—an uneasy complaint; and like all cases of suppressed humours, this hath a nasty tendency to the brain. Therefore (the more confused I get, the more I lean on Thus's and Hences and Therefores) you must not be down upon me, most noble Festus, altho' this letter should smack of some infirmity of judgment. I speak the words of soberness and truth; and would you were not almost but altogether as I am, except this swelling. Lord, Lord, if we could change personalities how we should hate it. How I should rebel at the office, repugn under the Ulster coat, and repudiate your monkish humours thus unjustly and suddenly thrust upon poor, infidel me! And as for you—why, my dear Charles, "a mouse that hath its lodging in a cat's ear" would not be so uneasy as you in your new conditions. I do not see how your temperament would come thro' the

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feverish longings to do things that cannot then (or perhaps ever) be accomplished, the feverish unrests and damnable indecisions, that it takes all my easy-going spirits to come through. A vane can live out anything in the shape of a wind; and that is how I can be, and am, a more serious person than you. Just as the light French seemed very serious to Sterne, light L. Stevenson can afford to bob about over the top of any deep sea of prospect or retrospect, where ironclad C. Baxter would incontinently go down with all hands. A fool is generally the wisest person out. The wise man must shut his eyes to all the perils and horrors that lie round him; but the cap and bells can go bobbing along the most slippery ledges and the bauble will not stir up sleeping lions. Hurray! for motley, for a good sound *insouciance,* for a healthy philosophic carelessness!

My dear Baxter, a word in your ear—"DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE A FOOL?" How easy the world would go on with you—literally on castors. The only reason a wise man can assign for getting drunk is that he wishes to enjoy for a while the blessed immunities and sunshiny weather of the land of fooldom. But a fool, who dwells ever there, has no excuse at all. *That* is a happy land, if you like—and not so far away either. Take a fool's advice and let us strive without ceasing to get into it. Hark in your ear again: "THEY ALLOW PEOPLE TO REASON IN THAT LAND." I wish I could take you by the hand and lead you away into its pleasant boundaries. There is no custom-house on the frontier, and you may take in what books you will. There are no manners and customs; but men and women grow up, like trees in a still, well-walled garden, "at their own sweet will." There is no prescribed or customary folly—no motley, cap, or bauble: out of the well of each one's own innate absurdity he is allowed and encouraged freely to draw and to communicate; and it is a strange thing how this natural fooling comes so nigh to one's better thoughts of wisdom; and stranger still, that all this discord of people speaking in their own natural moods and keys, masses itself into a far more perfect harmony than all the dismal, official unison in which they sing in other countries. Heart-singing seems best all the world over.

I who live in England must wear the hackneyed symbols of the profession, to show that I have (at least) consular immunities, coming as I do out of another land, where they are not so wise as they are here, but fancy that God likes what he makes and is not best pleased with us when we deface and dissemble all that he has given us and put about us to one common standard of —— Highty-Tighty!—when was a jester obliged to finish his sentence? I cut so strong a pirouette that all my bells jingle, and come down in an attitude, with one hand upon my hip. The evening's entertainment is over,—"and if our kyind friends——"

Hurrah! I feel relieved. I have put out my gibber, and if you have read thus far, you will have taken it in. I wonder if you will ever come this length. I shall try a trap for you, and insult you here, on this last page. "O Baxter what a damned humbug you are!" There,—shall this insult bloom and die unseen, or will you come toward me, when next we meet, with a face deformed with anger and demand speedy and bloody satisfaction. *Nous verrons,* which is French.

R. L. STEVENSON.

II

STUDENT DAYS

Continued

ORDERED SOUTH

(SEPTEMBER, 1873–JULY, 1875)

II

STUDENT DAYS

Continued

ORDERED SOUTH

(SEPTEMBER, 1873–JULY, 1875)

TO MRS. SITWELL

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After leaving Cockfield Stevenson spent a few days in London and a few with me in a cottage I then had at Norwood. This and the following letters were written in the next days after his return home. "Bob" in the last paragraph is Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, a brilliant elder cousin to whom Louis had been from boyhood devotedly attached: afterwards known as the brilliant painter-critic and author of *Velasquez*, etc.

17 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH,
Monday, September 1st, 1873.

I HAVE arrived, as you see, without accident; but I never had a more wretched journey in my life. I could not settle to read anything; I bought Darwin's last book in despair, for I knew I could generally read Darwin, but it was a failure. However, the book served me in good stead; for when a couple of children got in at Newcastle, I struck up a great friendship with them on the strength of the illustrations. These two children (a girl of nine and a boy of six) had never before travelled in a railway, so that everything was a glory to them, and they were never

1873 ÆT. 22 tired of watching the telegraph posts and trees and hedges go racing past us to the tail of the train; and the girl I found quite entered into the most daring personifications that I could make. A little way on, about Alnmouth, they had their first sight of the sea; and it was wonderful how loath they were to believe that what they saw was water; indeed it was very still and grey and solid-looking under a sky to match. It was worth the fare, yet a little farther on, to see the delight of the girl when she passed into "another country," with the black Tweed under our feet, crossed by the lamps of the passenger bridge. I remember the first time I had gone into "another country," over the same river from the other side.

Bob was not at the station when I arrived; but a friend of his brought me a letter; and he is to be in the first thing to-morrow. Do you know, I think yesterday and the day before were the two happiest days of my life? I would not have missed last month for eternity. — Ever yours, R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[EDINBURGH], *Monday, 22nd September, 1873.*

I HAVE just had another disagreeable to-night. It is difficult indeed to steer steady among the breakers: I am always touching ground; generally it is my own blame, for I cannot help getting friendly with my father (whom I *do* love), and so speaking foolishly with my mouth. I have yet to learn in ordinary conversation that reserve and silence that I must try to unlearn in the matter of the feelings.

The news that *Roads* would do reached me in good season; I had begun utterly to despair of doing anything. Certainly I do not think I should be in a hurry to commit myself about the Covenanters; the whole subject turns round about me and so branches out to this side and that, that I grow bewildered; and one cannot write discreetly about any one little corner of an historical period, until one has an organic view of the whole. I have, however—given life and health—great hope of my Covenanters; indeed, there is a lot of precious dust to be beaten out of that stack even by a very infirm hand.

Much later.—I can scarcely see to write just now; so please excuse. We have had an awful scene. All that my father had to say has been put forth—not that it was anything new; only it is the devil to hear. I don't know what to do—the world goes hopelessly round about me; there is no more possibility of doing, living, being anything but a *beast*, and there's the end of it.

It is eleven, I think, for a clock struck. O Lord, there has been a deal of time through our hands since I went down to supper! All this has come from my own folly; I somehow could not think the gulf so impassable, and I read him some notes on the Duke of Argyll[1]—I thought he would agree so far, and that we might have some rational discussion on the rest. And now—after some hours—he has told me that he is a weak man, and that I am driving him too far, and that I know not what I am doing. O dear God, this is bad work!

I have lit a pipe and feel calmer. I say, my dear friend, I am killing my father—he told me to-night (by the way) that I alienated utterly my mother—and this is the result of my attempt to start fair and fresh and to do my best for all of them.

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[1] *I. e.* on his book, *The Reign of Law.*

I must wait till to-morrow ere I finish. I am to-night too excited.

Tuesday. — The sun is shining to-day, which is a great matter, and altogether the gale having blown off again, I live in a precarious lull. On the whole I am not displeased with last night; I kept my eyes open through it all, and I think, not only avoided saying anything that could make matters worse in the future, but said something that *may* do good. But a little better or a little worse is a trifle. I lay in bed this morning awake, for I was tired and cold and in no special hurry to rise, and heard my father go out for the papers; and then I lay and wished — O, if he could only *whistle* when he comes in again! But of course he did not. I have stopped that pipe.

Now, you see, I have written to you this time and sent it off, for both of which God forgive me.— Ever your faithful friend, R. L. S.

My father and I together can put about a year through in half an hour. Look here, you mustn't take this too much to heart. I shall be all right in a few hours. It 's impossible to depress me. And of course, when you can't do anything, there 's no need of being depressed. It 's all waste tissue. L.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[EDINBURGH], *Wednesday, September 24th, 1873.*

I HAVE found another "flowering isle." All this beautiful, quiet, sunlit day, I have been out in the country; down by the sea on my favourite coast between Granton and Queensferry. There was a delicate, delicious haze over the firth and sands on one side, and on the other was the shadow of the woods all riven with great golden rifts of sunshine. A little faint talk of waves upon the beach; the wild strange crying of seagulls over the sea; and the hoarse woodpigeons and shrill, sweet robins full of their autumn love-making among the trees made up a delectable concerto of peaceful noises. I spent the whole afternoon among these sights and sounds with Simpson. And we came home from Queensferry on the outside of the coach and four, along a beautiful way full of ups and downs among woody, uneven country, laid out (fifty years ago, I suppose) by my grandfather, on the notion of Hogarth's line of beauty. You see my taste for roads is hereditary.

Friday.—I was wakened this morning by a long flourish of bugles and a roll upon the drums—the *rêvêille* at the Castle. I went to the window; it was a grey, quiet dawn, a few people passed already up the street between the gardens, already I heard the noise of an early cab somewhere in the distance, most of the lamps had been extinguished but not all, and there were two or three lit windows in the opposite façade that showed where sick people and watchers had been awake all night and knew not yet of the new, cool day. This appealed to me with a special sadness: how often in the old times my nurse and I had looked across at these, and sympathised.

I wish you would read Michelet's *Louis Quatorze et la Rêvocation de l'Édit de Nantes*. I read it out in the garden, and the autumnal trees and weather, and my own autumnal humour, and the pitiable prolonged tragedies of Madame and of Molière, as they look, darkling and sombre, out of

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their niches in the great gingerbread façade of the *Grand Âge,* go wonderfully hand in hand.

I wonder if my revised paper has pleased the *Saturday?* If it has not, I shall be rather sorry—no, very sorry indeed—but not surprised and certainly not hurt. It will be a great disappointment; but I am glad to say that, among all my queasy, troublesome feelings, I have not a sensitive vanity. Not that I am not as conceited as you know me to be; only I go easy over the coals in that matter.

I have been out reading Hallam in the garden; and have been talking with my old friend the gardener, a man of singularly hard favour and few teeth. He consulted me this afternoon on the choice of books, premising that his taste ran mainly on war and travel. On travel I had to own at once my ignorance. I suggested Kinglake, but he had read that; and so, finding myself here unhorsed, I turned about and at last recollected Southey's *Lives of the Admirals,* and the volumes of Macaulay containing the wars of William. Can you think of any other for this worthy man? I believe him to hold me in as high an esteem as any one can do; and I reciprocate his respect, for he is quite an intelligent companion.

On Saturday morning I read Morley's article aloud to Bob in one of the walks of the public garden. I was full of it and read most excitedly; and we were ever, as we went to and fro, passing a bench where a man sat reading the Bible aloud to a small circle of the devout. This man is well known to me, sits there all day, sometimes reading, sometimes singing, sometimes distributing tracts. Bob laughed much at the opposition preachers—I never noticed it till he called my attention to the other; but it did not seem to me like opposition—does it to you?—each in his way was teaching what he thought best.

Last night, after reading Walt Whitman a long while for my attempt to write about him, I got *tête-montée*, rushed out up to M. S., came in, took out *Leaves of Grass*, and without giving the poor unbeliever time to object, proceeded to wade into him with favourite passages. I had at least this triumph, that he swore he must read some more of him.— Ever your faithful friend,

LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

On the advice of the Lord Advocate it had been agreed that Stevenson should present himself for admission as a student at one of the London Inns of Court and should come to town after the middle of October to be examined for that purpose. The following two letters refer to this purpose and to the formalities required for effecting it:

[EDINBURGH, *Oct. 15, 1873*], *Wednesday*.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Of course I knew as well as you that I was merely running before an illness; but I thought I should be in time to escape. However I was knocked over on Monday night with a bad sore throat, fever, rheumatism and a threatening of pleurisy, which last is, I think, gone. I still hope to be able to get away early next week, though I am not very clear as to how I shall manage the journey. If I don't get away on Wednesday at latest, I lose my excuse for going at all, and I do wish to escape a little while.

I shall see about the form when I get home, which I hope will be to-morrow (I was taken ill in a friend's house and have not yet been moved).

How could a broken-down engineer expect to make anything of *Roads*. Requiescant. When we get well (and if we get well), we shall do something better.—Yours sincerely,

R. L. STEVENSON.

Ye couche of pain.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[EDINBURGH, *October 16, 1873*], *Thursday*.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am at my wits' end about this abominable form of admission. I don't know what the devil it is; I haven't got one even if I did, and so can't sign.

Monday night is the very earliest on which (even if I go on mending at the very great pace I have made already) I can hope to be in London myself. But possibly it is only intimation that requires to be made on Tuesday morning; and one may possess oneself of a form of admission up to the eleventh hour. I send herewith a letter which I must ask you to cherish, as I count it a sort of talisman. Perhaps you may understand it, I don't.

If you don't understand it, please do not trouble and we must just hope that Tuesday morning will be early enough to do all. Of course I fear the exam. will spin me; indeed after this bodily and spiritual crisis I should not dream of coming up at all; only that I require it as a pretext for a moment's escape, which I want much.

I am so glad that *Roads* has got in. I had almost as soon have it in the *Portfolio* as the *Saturday;* the *P.* is so nicely printed and I am *gourmet* in type. I don't know how to thank you for your continual kindness to me; and

I am afraid I do not even feel grateful enough — you have let your kindnesses come on me so easily.—Yours sincerely, 1873 ÆT. 22

LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

When Stevenson a few days later came to London, it was before the physicians and not the lawyers that he must present himself; and the result of an examination by Sir Andrew Clark was his prompt and peremptory despatch to Mentone for a winter's rest and sunshine at a distance from all causes of mental agitation. This episode of his life gave occasion to the essay *Ordered South,* the only one of his writings in which he took the invalid point of view or allowed his health troubles in any degree to colour his work. Travelling south by slow stages, he wrote on the way a long diary-letter from which extracts follow:

AVIGNON [*November, 1873*].

I HAVE just read your letter upon the top of the hill beside the church and castle. The whole air was filled with sunset and the sound of bells; and I wish I could give you the least notion of the *southernness* and *Provençality* of all that I saw.

I cannot write while I am travelling; *c'est un défaut;* but so it is. I must have a certain feeling of being at home, and my head must have time to settle. The new images oppress me, and I have a fever of restlessness on me. You must not be disappointed at such shabby letters; and besides, remember my poor head and the fanciful crawling in the spine.

I am back again in the stage of thinking there is nothing the matter with me, which is a good sign; but I am wretchedly nervous. Anything like rudeness I am simply babyishly afraid of; and noises, and especially the sounds of certain voices, are the devil to me. A blind poet whom

1873 ÆT. 22 I found selling his immortal works in the streets of Sens, captivated me with the remarkable equable strength and sweetness of his voice; and I listened a long while and bought some of the poems; and now this voice, after I had thus got it thoroughly into my head, proved false metal and a really bad and horrible voice at bottom. It haunted me some time, but I think I am done with it now.

I hope you don't dislike reading bad style like this as much as I do writing it: it hurts me when neither words nor clauses fall into their places, much as it would hurt you to sing when you had a bad cold and your voice deceived you and missed every other note. I do feel so inclined to break the pen and write no more; and here *à propos* begins my back.

After dinner.—It blows to-night from the north down the valley of the Rhone, and everything is so cold that I have been obliged to indulge in a fire. There is a fine crackle and roar of burning wood in the chimney which is very homely and companionable, though it does seem to postulate a town all white with snow outside.

I have bought Sainte-Beuve's Chateaubriand and am immensely delighted with the critic. Chateaubriand is more antipathetic to me than any one else in the world.

I begin to wish myself arrived to-night. Travelling, when one is not quite well, has a good deal of unpleasantness. One is easily upset by cross incidents, and wants that *belle humeur* and spirit of adventure that makes a pleasure out of what is unpleasant.

Tuesday, November 11th.—There! There's a date for you. I shall be in Mentone for my birthday, with plenty of nice letters to read. I went away across the Rhone and up the hill on the other side that I might see the town from a distance. Avignon followed me with its bells and drums and bugles; for the old city has no equal for multitude of such noises. Crossing the bridge and seeing the brown turbid water foam and eddy about the piers, one could scarce believe one's eyes when one looked down upon the stream and saw the smooth blue mirroring tree and hill. Over on the other side, the sun beat down so furiously on the white road that I was glad to keep in the shadow and, when the occasion offered, to turn aside among the olive-yards. It was nine years and six months since I had been in an olive-yard. I found myself much changed, not so gay, but wiser and more happy. I read your letter again, and sat awhile looking down over the tawny plain and at the fantastic outline of the city. The hills seemed just fainting into the sky; even the great peak above Carpentras (Lord knows how many metres above the sea) seemed unsubstantial and thin in the breadth and potency of the sunshine.

I should like to stay longer here but I can't. I am driven forward by restlessness, and leave this afternoon about two. I am just going out now to visit again the church, castle, and hill, for the sake of the magnificent panorama, and besides, because it is the friendliest spot in all Avignon to me.

Later.—You cannot picture to yourself anything more steeped in hard bright sunshine than the view from the hill. The immovable inky shadow of the old bridge on the fleeting surface of the yellow river seemed more solid than the bridge itself. Just in the place where I sat yesterday evening a shaven man in a velvet cap was studying music

— evidently one of the singers for *La Muette de Portici* at the theatre to-night. I turned back as I went away: the white Christ stood out in strong relief on his brown cross against the blue sky, and the four kneeling angels and lanterns grouped themselves about the foot with a symmetry that was almost laughable; the musician read on at his music, and counted time with his hand on the stone step.

Menton, November 12th.—My first enthusiasm was on rising at Orange and throwing open the shutters. Such a great living flood of sunshine poured in upon me, that I confess to having danced and expressed my satisfaction aloud; in the middle of which the boots came to the door with hot water, to my great confusion.

To-day has been one long delight, coming to a magnificent climax on my arrival here. I gave up my baggage to an hotel porter and set off to walk at once. I was somewhat confused as yet as to my directions, for the station of course was new to me, and the hills had not sufficiently opened out to let me recognise the peaks. Suddenly, as I was going forward slowly in this confusion of mind, I was met by a great volley of odours out of the lemon and orange gardens, and the past linked on to the present, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole scene fell before me into order, and I was at home. I nearly danced again.

I suppose I must send off this to-night to notify my arrival in safety and good-humour and, I think, in good health, before relapsing into the old weekly vein. I hope this time to send you a weekly dose of sunshine from the south, instead of the jet of *snell* Edinburgh, east wind that used to was.—Ever your faithful friend, R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

MENTON, *November 13, 1873.*

I MUST pour out my disgust at the absence of a letter; my birthday nearly gone, and devil a letter—I beg pardon. After all, now I think of it, it is only a week since I left.

I have here the nicest room in Mentone. Let me explain. Ah! there 's the bell for the *table d'hôte*. Now to see if there is any one conversable within these walls.

In the interval my letters have come; none from you, but one from Bob, which both pained and pleased me. He cannot get on without me at all, he writes; he finds that I have been the whole world for him; that he only talked to other people in order that he might tell me afterwards about the conversation. Should I—I really don't know quite what to feel; I am so much astonished, and almost more astonished that he should have expressed it than that he should feel it; he never would have *said* it, I know. I feel a strange sense of weight and responsibility. Ever your faithful friend, R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The history of the scruples and ideas of duty in regard to money here expressed is set forth and further explained in retrospect in the fragment called *Lay Morals*, written in 1879. The Walt Whitman essay is not that afterwards printed in *Men and Books*, but an earlier and more enthusiastic version. Mr. Dowson, I believe, was the father of the unfortunate poet, the late Mr. Ernest Dowson. His acquaintance was the first result of Stevenson's search for "any one conversable" in the hotel.

MENTON, *Sunday* [*November 30, 1873*].

MY DEAR FRIEND,—To-day is as hot as it has been in the sun; and as I was a little tired and seedy, I went

1873 ÆT. 23 down and just drank in sunshine. A strong wind has risen out of the west; the great big dead leaves from the roadside planes scuttled about and chased one another over the gravel round me with a noise like little waves under the keel of a boat, and jumped up sometimes on to my lap and into my face. I lay down on my back at last, and looked up into the sky. The white corner of the hotel with a wide projection at the top, stood out in dazzling relief; and there was nothing else, save a few of the plane leaves that had got up wonderfully high and turned and eddied and flew here and there like little pieces of gold leaf, to break the extraordinary sea of blue. It was bluer than anything in the world here; wonderfully blue, and looking deeply peaceful, although in truth there was a high wind blowing.

I am concerned about the plane leaves. Hitherto it has always been a great feature to see these trees standing up head and shoulders and chest—head and body, in fact—above the wonderful blue-grey-greens of the olives, in one glory of red gold. Much more of this wind, and the gold, I fear, will be all spent.

9.20.—I must write you another little word. I have found here a new friend, to whom I grow daily more devoted—George Sand. I go on from one novel to another and think the last I have read the most sympathetic and friendly in tone, until I have read another. It is a life in dreamland. Have you read *Mademoiselle Merquem?*

Monday.—I did not quite know last night what to say to you about *Mdlle Merquem.* If you want to be unpleasantly moved, read it.

I am gloomy and out of spirits to-night in consequence of a ridiculous scene at the *table d'hôte*, where a parson whom I rather liked took offence at something I said and we had almost a quarrel. It was mopped up and stifled, like spilt wine with a napkin; but it leaves an unpleasant impression.

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I have again ceased all work, because I felt that it strained my head a little, and so I have resumed the tedious task of waiting with folded hands for better days. But thanks to George Sand and the sunshine, I am very jolly.

That last word was so much out of key that I could sit no longer, and went away to seek out my clergyman and apologise to him. He was gone to bed. I don't know what makes me take this so much to heart. I suppose it 's nerves or pride or something; but I am unhappy about it. I am going to drown my sorrows in *Consuelo* and burn some incense in my pipe to the god of Contentment and Forgetfulness.

I do not know, but I hope, if I can only get better, I shall be a help to you soon in every way and no more a trouble and burthen. All my difficulties about life have so cleared away; the scales have fallen from my eyes, and the broad road of my duty lies out straight before me without cross or hindrance. I have given up all hope, all fancy rather, of making literature my hold: I see that I have not capacity enough. My life shall be, if I can make it, my only business. I am desirous to practise now, rather than to preach, for I know that I should ever preach badly, and men can more easily forgive faulty practice than dull sermons. If Colvin does not think that I shall be able to support myself soon by literature, I shall give it up and go (horrible as the thought is to me) into an office of some sort: the first, the main question is, that I must live by my own hands; after that come the others.

1873 ÆT. 23 You will not regard me as a madman, I am sure. It is a very rational aberration at least to try to put your beliefs into practice. Strangely enough, it has taken me a long time to see this distinctly with regard to my whole creed; but I have seen it at last, praised be my sickness and my leisure! I have seen it at last; the sun of my duty has risen; I have enlisted for the first time, and after long coquetting with the shilling, under the banner of the Holy Ghost![1]

8.15.—If you had seen the moon last night! It was like transfigured sunshine; as clear and mellow, only showing everything in a new wonderful significance. The shadows of the leaves on the road were so strangely black that Dowson and I had difficulty in believing that they were not solid, or at least pools of dark mire. And the hills and the trees, and the white Italian houses with lit windows! O! nothing could bring home to you the keenness and the reality and the wonderful *Unheimlichkeit* of all these. When the moon rises every night over the Italian coast, it makes a long path over the sea as yellow as gold.

How I happened to be out in the moonlight yesterday, was that Dowson and I spent the evening with an odd man called Bates, who played Italian music to us with great feeling; all of which was quite a dissipation in my still existence.

Friday.—I cannot endure to be dependent much longer, it stops my mouth. Something I must find shortly. I mean when I am able for anything. However I am much better already; and have been writing not altogether my worst although not very well. Walt Whitman is stopped.

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[1] Alluding to Heine's *Ritter von dem heiligen Geist.*

I have bemired it so atrociously by working at it when I was out of humour that I must let the colour dry; and alas! what I have been doing in this place doesn't seem to promise any money. However, it is all practice and it interests myself extremely. I have now received £80, some £55 of which still remain; all this is more debt to civilisation and my fellowmen. When shall I be able to pay it back? You do not know how much this money question begins to take more and more importance in my eyes every day. It is an old phrase of mine that money is the *atmosphere* of civilised life, and I do hate to take the breath out of other people's nostrils. I live here at the rate of more than £3 a week and I do nothing for it. If I didn't hope to get well and do good work yet and more than repay my debts to the world, I should consider it right to invest an extra franc or two in laudanum. But I *will* repay it.—Always your faithful friend, 1873 ÆT. 23

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

[MENTON, *December, 1873*.]

MY DEAR BAXTER,—At last, I must write. I must say straight out that I am not recovering as I could wish. I am no stronger than I was when I came here, and I pay for every walk, beyond say a quarter of a mile in length, by one or two, or even three, days of more or less prostration. Therefore let nobody be down upon me for not writing. I was very thankful to you for answering my letter; and for the princely action of Simpson in writing to me, I mean before I had written to him, I was ditto to an almost higher degree. I hope one or another of you will write again soon; and, remember, I still live in hope of reading Grahame Murray's address.

I have not made a joke, upon my living soul, since I left London. O! except one, a very small one, that I had made before, and that I very timidly repeated in a half-exhilarated state towards the close of dinner, like one of those dead-alive flies, that we see pretending to be quite light and full of the frivolity of youth in the first sunshiny days. It was about mothers' meetings, and it was damned small, and it was my ewe lamb—the Lord knows, I couldn't have made another to save my life—and a clergyman quarrelled with me, and there was as nearly an explosion as could be. This has not fostered my leaning towards pleasantry. I felt that it was a very cold, hard world that night.

My dear Charles, is the sky blue at Mentone? Was that your question? Well, it depends upon what you call blue; it 's a question of taste, I suppose. Is the sky blue? You poor critter, you never saw blue sky worth being called blue in the same day with it. And I should rather fancy that the sun did shine, I should. And the moon doesn't shine either. O no! (This last is sarcastic.) Mentone is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and has always had a very warm corner in my heart since first I knew it eleven years ago.

11th December.—I live in the same hotel with Lord X. He has black whiskers, and has been successful in raising some kids; rather a melancholy success; they are weedy looking kids in Highland clo'. They have a tutor with them who respires Piety and that kind of humble your-lordship's-most-obedient sort of gentlemanliness that noble-men's tutors have generally. They all get livings, these men, and silvery hair and a gold watch from their attached pupil; and they sit in the porch and make the watch repeat for their little grandchildren, and tell them long stories, beginning, "When I was a private tutor in the family of," etc., and the grandchildren cock snooks at them behind their backs and go away whenever they can to get the groom to teach them bad words.

Sidney Colvin will arrive here on Saturday or Sunday; so I shall have some one to jaw with. And, seriously, this is a great want. I have not been all these weeks in idleness, as you may fancy, without much thinking as to my future; and I have a great deal in view that may or may not be possible (that I do not yet know), but that is at least an object and a hope before me. I cannot help recurring to seriousness a moment before I stop; for I must say that living here a good deal alone, and having had ample time to look back upon my past, I have become very serious all over. If I can only get back my health, by God! I shall not be as useless as I have been.—Ever yours, *mon vieux*, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[MENTON, *December, 1873*], *Sunday*.

THE first violet. There is more sweet trouble for the heart in the breath of this small flower than in all the wines of all the vineyards of Europe. I cannot contain myself. I do not think so small a thing has ever given me such a princely festival of pleasure. I feel as if my heart were a little bunch of violets in my bosom; and my brain is pleasantly intoxicated with the wonderful odour. I

1873 ÆT. 23 suppose I am writing nonsense, but it does not seem nonsense to me. Is it not a wonderful odour? is it not something incredibly subtle and perishable? It is like a wind blowing to one out of fairyland. No one need tell me that the phrase is exaggerated if I say that this violet *sings;* it sings with the same voice as the March blackbird; and the same adorable tremor goes through one's soul at the hearing of it.

Monday.—All yesterday I was under the influence of opium. I had been rather seedy during the night and took a dose in the morning, and for the first time in my life it took effect upon me. I had a day of extraordinary happiness; and when I went to bed there was something almost terrifying in the pleasures that besieged me in the darkness. Wonderful tremors filled me; my head swam in the most delirious but enjoyable manner; and the bed softly oscillated with me, like a boat in a very gentle ripple. It does not make me write a good style apparently, which is just as well, lest I should be tempted to renew the experiment; and some verses which I wrote turn out on inspection to be not quite equal to *Kubla Khan.* However, I was happy, and the recollection is not troubled by any reaction this morning.

Wednesday.—Do you know, I think I am much better. I really enjoy things, and I really feel dull occasionally, neither of which was possible with me before; and though I am still tired and weak, I almost think I feel a stirring among the dry bones. O, I should like to recover, and be once more well and happy and fit for work! And then to be able to begin really to my life; to have done, for the rest of time, with preluding and doubting; and to take hold of the pillars strongly with Samson—to burn my ships with (whoever did it). O, I begin to feel my spirits come back to me again at the thought!

Thursday.—I sat along the beach this morning under some reeds (or canes—I know not which they are): everything was so tropical; nothing visible but the glaring white shingle, the blue sea, the blue sky, and the green plumes of the canes thrown out against the latter some ten or fifteen feet above my head. The noise of the surf alone broke the quiet. I had somehow got *Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh* into my head; and I was happy for I do not know how long, sitting there and repeating to myself these lines. It is wonderful how things somehow fall into a full satisfying harmony, and out of the fewest elements there is established a sort of small perfection. It was so this morning. I did not want anything further.

TO MRS. SITWELL

In the third week of December I went out to join my friend for a part of the Christmas vacation, and found him without tangible disease, but very weak and ailing; ill-health and anxiety, however, neither then nor at any time diminished his charm as a companion. He left Mentone to meet me at the old town of Monaco, where we spent a few days and from whence these stray notes of nature and human nature were written.

MONACO, *Tuesday* [*December, 1873*].

WE have been out all day in a boat; lovely weather and almost dead calm, only the most infinitesimal and indeterminate of oscillations moved us hither and thither; the sails were duly set, and flapped about idly overhead. Our boatman was a man of a delightful humour, who told us many tales of the sea, notably one of a doctor, who

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was an Englishman, and who seemed almost an epitome of vices—drunken, dishonest, and utterly without faith; and yet he was a *charmant garçon.* He told us many amusing circumstances of the doctor's incompetence and dishonesty, and imitated his accent with a singular success. I couldn't quite see that he was a charming *garçon*—"*O, oui—comme caractère, un charmant garçon.*" We landed on that Cap Martin, the place of firs and rocks and myrtle and rosemary of which I spoke to you. As we pulled along in the fresh shadow, the wonderfully clean scents blew out upon us, as if from islands of spice—only how much better than cloves and cinnamon!

Friday.—Colvin and I are sitting on a seat on the battlemented gardens of Old Monaco. The day is grey and clouded, with a little red light on the horizon, and the sea, hundreds of feet below us, is a sort of purple dove-colour. Shrub-geraniums, firs, and aloes cover all available shelves and terraces, and where these become impossible, the prickly pear precipitates headlong downwards its bunches of oval plates; so that the whole face of the cliff is covered with an arrested fall (please excuse clumsy language), a sort of fall of the evil angels petrified midway on its career. White gulls sail past below us every now and then, sometimes singly, sometimes by twos and threes, and sometimes in a great flight. The sharp perfume of the shrub-geraniums fills the air.

I cannot write, in any sense of the word; but I am as happy as can be, and wish to notify the fact, before it passes. The sea is blue, grey, purple and green; very subdued and peaceful; earlier in the day it was marbled by small keen specks of sun and larger spaces of faint irra-

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diation; but the clouds have closed together now, and these appearances are no more. Voices of children and occasional crying of gulls; the mechanical noise of a gardener somewhere behind us in the scented thicket; and the faint report and rustle of the waves on the precipice far below, only break in upon the quietness to render it more complete and perfect. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

After spending a few days in one of the more retired hotels of Monte Carlo, we went on to Mentone and settled at the Hotel Mirabeau, long since, I believe, defunct, near the eastern extremity of the town. The little American girl mentioned in the last paragraph is the same we shall meet later under her full name of Marie Johnstone.

[HOTEL MIRABEAU], MENTON, *January 2nd, 1874.*

HERE I am over in the east bay of Mentone, where I am not altogether sorry to find myself. I move so little that I soon exhaust the immediate neighbourhood of my dwelling places. Our reason for coming here was however very simple. Hobson's choice. Mentone during my absence has filled marvellously.

Continue to address P. R.[1] Menton; and try to conceive it as possible that I am not a drivelling idiot. When I wish an address changed, it is quite on the cards that I shall be able to find language explicit enough to express the desire. My whole desire is to avoid complication of addresses. It is quite fatal. If two P. R.'s have contradictory orders they will continue to play battledoor and shuttlecock with an unhappy epistle, which will never get farther afield but perish there miserably.

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[1] *Poste Restante.*

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You act too much on the principle that whatever I do is done unwisely; and that whatever I do not, has been culpably forgotten. This is wounding to my nat'ral vanity.

I have not written for three days I think; but what days! They were very cold; and I must say that I was able thoroughly to appreciate the blessings of Mentone. Old Smoko this winter would evidently have been very summary with me. I could not stand the cold at all. I exhausted all my own and all Colvin's clothing; I then retired to the house, and then to bed; in a condition of sorrow for myself unequalled. The sun is forth again (laus Deo) and the wind is milder, and I am greatly re-established. A certain asperity of temper still lingers, however, which Colvin supports with much mildness.

In this hotel, I have a room on the first floor! Luxury, however, is not altogether regardless of expense. We only pay 13 francs per day—3½ more than at the Pavillon on the third floor.—And beggars must not be choosers. We were very nearly houseless, the night we came. And it is rarely that such winds of adversity blow men into king's Palaces.

Looking over what has gone before, it seems to me that it is not strictly polite. I beg to withdraw all that is offensive.

At *table d'hôte*, we have some people who amuse us much; two Americans, who would try to pass for French people, and their daughter, the most charming of little girls. Both Colvin and I have planned an abduction already. The whole hotel is devoted to her; and the waiters continually do smuggle out comfits and fruit and pudding to her.

All well.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *Sunday, 11th January, 1874.*

IN many ways this hotel is more amusing than the Pavillon. There are the children, to begin with; and then there are games every evening — the stool of repentance, question and answer, etc.; and then we speak French, although that is not exactly an advantage in so far as personal brilliancy is concerned.

I am in lovely health again to-day: I walked as far as the Pont St. Louis very nearly, besides walking and knocking about among the olives in the afternoon. I do not make much progress with my French; but I do make a little, I think. I was pleased with my success this evening, though I do not know if others shared the satisfaction.

The two Russian ladies are from Georgia all the way. They do not at all answer to the description of Georgian slaves however, being graceful and refined, and only good-looking after you know them a bit.

Please remember me very kindly to the Jenkins, and thank them for having asked about me. Tell Mrs. J. that I am engaged in perfecting myself in the "Gallic idiom," in order to be a worthier Vatel for the future. Monsieur Folleté, our host, is a Vatel by the way. He cooks himself, and is not insensible to flattery on the score of his table. I began, of course, to complain of the wine (part of the routine of life at Mentone); I told him that where one found a kitchen so exquisite, one astonished oneself that the wine was not up to the same form. "Et voilà précisément mon côté faible, monsieur," he replied, with an indescribable amplitude of gesture. "Que voulez-

1874 ÆT. 23 vous? Moi, je suis cuisinier!" It was as though Shakespeare, called to account for some such peccadillo as the Bohemian seaport, should answer magnificently that he was a poet. So Folleté lives in a golden zone of a certain sort—a golden, or rather torrid zone, whence he issues twice daily purple as to his face—and all these clouds and vapours and ephemeral winds pass far below him and disturb him not.

He has another hobby however—his garden, round which it is his highest pleasure to lead the unwilling guest. Whenever he is not in the kitchen, he is hanging round loose, seeking whom he may show his garden to. Much of my time is passed in studiously avoiding him, and I have brought the art to a very extreme pitch of perfection. The fox, often hunted, becomes wary.—Ever your affectionate son, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[MENTON, *January, 1874*], *Wednesday.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is still so cold, I cannot tell you how miserable the weather is. I have begun my "Walt Whitman" again seriously. Many winds have blown since I last laid it down, when sickness took me in Edinburgh. It seems almost like an ill-considered jest to take up these old sentences, written by so different a person under circumstances so different, and try to string them together and organise them into something anyway whole and comely; it is like continuing another man's book. Almost every word is a little out of tune to me now but I shall pull it through for all that and make something that will interest you yet on this subject that I had proposed to myself and partly planned already, before I left for Cockfield last July. 1874 ÆT. 23

I am very anxious to hear how you are. My own health is quite very good; I am a healthy octogenarian; very old, I thank you and of course not so active as a young man, but hale withal; a lusty December. This is so; such is R. L. S.

I am a little bothered about Bob, a little afraid that he is living too poorly. The fellow he chums with spends only two francs a day on food, with a little excess every day or two to keep body and soul together, and though Bob is not so austere I am afraid he draws it rather too fine himself.

Friday.—We have all got our photographs; it is pretty fair, they say, of me and as they are particular in the matter of photographs, and besides partial judges, I suppose I may take that for proven. Of Nellie there is one quite adorable. The weather is still cold. My "Walt Whitman" at last looks really well: I think it is going to get into shape in spite of the long gestation.

Sunday.—Still cold and grey, and a high imperious wind off the sea. I see nothing particularly *couleur de rose* this morning: but I am trying to be faithful to my creed and hope. O yes, one can do something to make things happier and better; and to give a good example before men and show them how goodness and fortitude and faith remain undiminished after they have been stripped bare of all that is formal and outside. We must do that; you have done it already; and I shall follow and shall make a worthy life, and you must live to approve of me. R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The following are two different impressions of the Mediterranean, dated on two different Mondays in January:

YES, I am much better; very much better I think I may say. Although it is funny how I have ceased to be able to write with the improvement of my health. Do you notice how for some time back you have had no descriptions of anything? The reason is that I can't describe anything. No words come to me when I see a thing. I want awfully to tell you to-day about a little "*piece*" of green sea, and gulls, and clouded sky with the usual golden mountain-breaks to the southward. It was wonderful, the sea near at hand was living emerald; the white breasts and wings of the gulls as they circled above—high above even—were dyed bright green by the reflection. And if you could only have seen or if any right word would only come to my pen to tell you how wonderfully these illuminated birds floated hither and thither under the grey purples of the sky!

To-day has been windy but not cold. The sea was troubled and had a fine fresh saline smell like our own seas, and the sight of the breaking waves, and above all the spray that drove now and again in my face, carried me back to storms that I have enjoyed, O how much! in other places. Still (as Madame Zassetsky justly remarked) there is something irritating in a stormy sea whose waves come always to the same spot and never farther: it looks like playing at passion: it reminds one of the loathsome sham waves in a stage ocean.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

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[MENTON, *January, 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I write to let you know that my cousin may possibly come to Paris before you leave; he will likely look you up to hear about me, etc. I want to tell you about him before you see him, as I am tired of people misjudging him. You know *me* now. Well, Bob is just such another mutton, only somewhat farther wandered. He has all the same elements of character that I have: no two people were ever more alike, only that the world has gone more unfortunately for him although more evenly. Besides which, he is really a gentleman, and an admirable true friend, which is not a common article. I write this as a letter of introduction in case he should catch you ere you leave.

Monday.—No letters to-day. *Sacrê chien, Dieu de Dieu*—and I have written with exemplary industry. But I am hoping that no news is good news and shall continue so to hope until all is blue.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

It had been a very cold Christmas at Monaco and Monte Carlo, and Stevenson had no adequate overcoat, so it was agreed that when I went to Paris I should try and find him a warm cloak or wrap. I amused myself looking for one suited to his taste for the picturesque and piratical in apparel, and found one in the style of 1830–40, dark blue and flowing, and fastening with a snake buckle.

[MENTON, *January, 1874*], *Friday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thank you very much for your note. This morning I am stupid again; can do nothing at

1874 ÆT. 23 all; am no good "comme plumitif." I think it must be the cold outside. At least that would explain my addled head and intense laziness.

O why did you tell me about that cloak? Why didn't you buy it? Isn't it in Julius Cæsar that Pompey blames—no not Pompey but a friend of Pompey's—well, Pompey's friend, I mean the friend of Pompey—blames somebody else who was his friend—that is who was the friend of Pompey's friend—because he (the friend of Pompey's friend) had not done something right off, but had come and asked him (Pompey's friend) whether he (the friend of Pompey's friend) ought to do it or no? There I fold my hands with some complacency: that 's a piece of very good narration. I am getting into good form. These classical instances are always distracting. I was talking of the cloak. It 's awfully dear. Are there no cheap and nasty imitations? Think of that—if, however, it were the opinion (ahem) of competent persons that the great cost of the mantle in question was no more than proportionate to its durability; if it were to be a joy for ever; if it would cover my declining years and survive me in anything like integrity for the comfort of my executors; if—I have the word—if the price indicates (as it seems) the quality of *perdurability* in the fabric; if, in fact, it would not be extravagant, but only the leariest economy to lay out £5 15 in a single mantle without seam and without price, and if—and if—it really fastens with an agrafe—I would BUY it. But not unless. If not a cheap imitation would be the move.—Ever yours, R. L. S.

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TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The following is in answer to a set of numbered questions, of which the first three are of no general interest.

[MENTON], *Monday, January 19th, 1874.*

ANSWERS to a series of questions.

. . . .

4. Nelitchka, or Nelitska, as you know already by this time, is my adorable kid's name. Her laugh does more good to one's health than a month at the seaside: as she said to-day herself, when asked whether she was a boy or a girl, after having denied both with gravity, she is an angel.

5. O no, her brain is not in a chaos; it is only the brains of those who hear her. It is all plain sailing for her. She wishes to refuse or deny anything, and there is the English "No fank you" ready to her hand; she wishes to admire anything, and there is the German "schön"; she wishes to sew (which she does with admirable seriousness and clumsiness), and there is the French "coudre"; she wishes to say she is ill, and there is the Russian "bulla"; she wishes to be down on any one, and there is the Italian "Berecchino"; she wishes to play at a railway train, and there is her own original word "Collie" (say the o with a sort of Gaelic twirl). And all these words are equally good.

7. I am called M. Stevenson by everybody except Nelitchka, who calls me M. Berecchino.

8. The weather to-day is no end: as bright and as warm as ever. I have been out on the beach all afternoon with the Russians. Madame Garschine has been reading Russian to me; and I cannot tell prose from verse in that

delectable tongue, which is a pity. Johnson came out to tell us that Corsica was visible, and there it was over a white, sweltering sea, just a little darker than the pallid blue of the sky, and when one looked at it closely, breaking up into sun-brightened peaks.

I may mention that Robinet has never heard an Englishman with so little accent as I have—ahem—ahem—eh?—What do you say to that? I don't suppose I have said five sentences in English to-day; all French; all bad French, alas!

I am thought to be looking better. Madame Zassetsky said I was all green when I came here first, but that I am all right in colour now, and she thinks fatter. I am very partial to the Russians; I believe they are rather partial to me. I am supposed to be an *esprit observateur! À mon age, c'est étonnant comme je suis observateur!*

The second volume of *Clément Marot* has come. Where and O where is the first?—Ever your affectionate

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The Bottle here mentioned is a story that had been some time in hand called *The Curate of Anstruther's Bottle;* afterwards abandoned like so many early attempts of the same kind.

[MENTON, *January, 1874.*]

MY DEAR S. C.,—I suppose this will be my last note then. I think you will find everything very jolly here, I am very jolly myself. I worked six hours to-day. I am occupied in transcribing *The Bottle*, which is pleasant work to me; I find much in it that I still think excellent and much that I am doubtful about; my convention is so terribly difficult that I have to put out much that pleases me, and much that I still preserve I only preserve with misgiving. I wonder if my convention is not a little too hard and too much in the style of those decadent curiosities, poems without the letter E, poems going with the alphabet and the like. And yet the idea, if rightly understood and treated as a convention always and not as an abstract principle, should not so much hamper one as it seems to do. The idea is not, of course, to put in nothing but what would naturally have been noted and remembered and handed down, but not to put in anything that would make a person stop and say—how could this be known? Without doubt it has the advantage of making one rely on the essential interest of a situation and not cocker up and validify feeble intrigue with incidental fine writing and scenery, and pyrotechnic exhibitions of inappropriate cleverness and sensibility. I remember Bob once saying to me that the quadrangle of Edinburgh University was a good thing and our having a talk as to how it could be employed in different arts. I then stated that the different doors and staircases ought to be brought before a reader of a story not by mere recapitulation but by the use of them, by the descent of different people one after the other by each of them. And that the grand feature of shadow and the light of the one lamp in the corner should also be introduced only as they enabled people in the story to see one another or prevented them. And finally that whatever could not thus be worked into the evolution of the action had no right to be commemorated at all. After all, it is a story you are telling; not a place you are to describe; and everything that does not attach itself to the story is out of place.

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This is a lecture, not a letter, and it seems rather like sending coals to Newcastle to write a lecture to a subsidised professor. I hope you have seen Bob by this time. I know he is anxious to meet you and I am in great anxiety to know what you think of his prospects—frankly, of course: as for his person, I don't care a damn what you think of it: I am case-hardened in that matter.

I wrote a French note to Madame Zassetsky the other day, and there were no errors in it. The complete Gaul, as you may see. — Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *Monday, January 26th, 1874.*

MY DEAR FATHER, — Heh! Heh! business letter finished. Receipt acknowledged without much ado, and I think with a certain commercial decision and brevity. The signature is good but not original.

I should rather think I *had* lost my heart to the wee princess. Her mother demanded the other day "*À quand les noces?*" which Mrs. Stevenson will translate for you in case you don't see it yourself.

I had a political quarrel last night with the American; it was a real quarrel for about two minutes; we relieved our feelings and separated; but a mutual feeling of shame led us to a most moving reconciliation, in which the American vowed he would shed his best blood for England. In looking back upon the interview, I feel that I have learned something; I scarcely appreciated how badly England had behaved, and how well she deserves the hatred the Americans bear her. It would have made you laugh if you could have been present and seen your unpatriotic son thundering anathemas in the moonlight against all those that were not the friend of England. Johnson being nearly as nervous as I, we were both very ill after it, which added a further pathos to the reconciliation. 1874 ÆT. 23

There is no good in sending this off to-day, as I have sent another letter this morning already.

O, a remark of the Princess's amused me the other day. Somebody wanted to give Nelitchka garlic as a medicine. *"Quoi? Une petite amour comme ça, qu'on ne pourrait pas baiser? Il n'y a pas de sens en cela!"*

I am reading a lot of French histories just now, and the spelling keeps one in a good humour all day long—I mean the spelling of English names.—Your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON, *January 29, 1874*], *Thursday*.

Marot vol. I arrived. The post has been at its old games. A letter of the 31st and one of the 2nd arrive at the same moment.

I have had a great pleasure. Mrs. Andrews had a book of Scotch airs, which I brought over here, and set Madame Z. to work upon them. They are so like Russian airs that they cannot contain their astonishment. I was quite out of my mind with delight. "The Flowers of the Forest"—"Auld Lang Syne"—"Scots wha hae"—"Wandering Willie"—"Jock o' Hazeldean"—"My Boy Tammie," which my father whistles so often—I

1874 ÆT. 23 had no conception how much I loved them. The air which pleased Madame Zassetsky the most was "Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin yet?" It is certainly no end. And I was so proud that they were appreciated. No triumph of my own, I am sure, could ever give me such vainglorious satisfaction. You remember, perhaps, how conceited I was to find "Auld Lang Syne" popular in its German dress; but even that was nothing to the pleasure I had yesterday at the success of our dear airs.

The edition is called "*The Songs of Scotland without Words for the Pianoforte*," edited by J. T. Surrenne, published by Wood in George Street. As these people have been so kind to me, I wish you would get a copy of this and send it out. If that should be too dear, or anything, Mr. Mowbray would be able to tell you what is the best substitute, would he not? *This* I really would like you to do, as Madame proposes to hire a copyist to copy those she likes, and so it is evident she wants them.

Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

With reference to the political allusions in the following it will be remembered that this was the date of Mr. Gladstone's dissolution, followed by his defeat at the polls notwithstanding his declared intention of abolishing the income-tax.

[MENTON], *February 1st, 1874.*

I AM so sorry to hear of poor Mr. M.'s death. He was really so amiable and kind that no one could help liking him, and carrying away a pleasant recollection of his simple, happy ways. I hope you will communicate to all the family how much I feel with them.

Madame Zassetsky is Nelitchka's mamma. They have both husbands, and they are in Russia, and the ladies are both here for their health. They make it very pleasant for me here. To-day we all went a drive to the Cap Martin, and the Cap was adorable in the splendid sunshine.

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I read J. H. A. Macdonald's speech with interest; his sentiments are quite good, I think. I would support him against M'Laren at once. What has disgusted me most as yet about this election is the detestable proposal to do away with the income tax. Is there no shame about the easy classes? Will those who have nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the advantage of our society, never consent to pay a single tax unless it is to be paid also by those who have to bear the burthen and heat of the day, with almost none of the reward? And the selfishness here is detestable, because it is so deliberate. A man may not feel poverty very keenly and may live a quiet self-pleasing life in pure thoughtlessness; but it is quite another matter when he knows thoroughly what the issues are, and yet wails pitiably because he is asked to pay a little more, even if it does fall hardly sometimes, than those who get almost none of the benefit. It is like the healthy child crying because they do not give him a goody, as they have given to his sick brother to take away the taste of the dose. I have not expressed myself clearly; but for all that, you ought to understand, I think.

Friday, February 6th.—The wine has arrived, and a dozen of it has been transferred to me; it is much better than Folleté's stuff. We had a masquerade last night at the Villa Marina; Nellie in a little red satin cap, in a red satin suit of boy's clothes, with a funny little black tail that

1874 ÆT. 23 stuck out behind her, and wagged as she danced about the room, and gave her a look of Puss in Boots; Pella as a contadina; Monsieur Robinet as an old woman, and Mademoiselle as an old lady with blue spectacles.

Yesterday we had a visit from one of whom I had often heard from Mrs. Sellar—Andrew Lang. He is good-looking, delicate, Oxfordish, etc.

My cloak is the most admirable of all garments. For warmth, unequalled; for a sort of pensive, Roman stateliness, sometimes warming into Romantic guitarism, it is simply without concurrent; it starts alone. If you could see me in my cloak, it would impress you. I am hugely better, I think: I stood the cold these last few days without trouble, instead of taking to bed, as I did at Monte Carlo. I hope you are going to send the Scotch music.

I am stupid at letter-writing again; I don't know why. I hope it may not be permanent; in the meantime, you must take what you can get and be hopeful. The Russian ladies are as kind and nice as ever.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[MENTON, *February 6, 1874*], *Friday*.

LAST night we had a masquerade at the Villa Marina. Pella was dressed as a contadina and looked beautiful; and little Nellie, in red satin cap and wonderful red satin jacket and little breeches as of a nondescript impossible boy; to which Madame Garschine had slily added a little black tail that wagged comically behind her as she danced about the room, and got deliciously tilted up over the middle bar of the back of her chair as she sat at tea, with an irresistible suggestion of Puss in Boots—well, Nellie thus masqueraded (to get back to my sentence again) was all that I could have imagined. She held herself so straight and stalwart, and had such infinitesimal dignity of carriage; and then her big baby face, already quite definitely marked with her sex, came in so funnily atop that she got clear away from all my power of similes and resembled nothing in the world but Nellie in masquerade. Then there was Robinet in a white nightgown, old woman's cap (*mutch*, in my vernacular), snuff-box and crutch doubled up and yet leaping and gyrating about the floor with incredible agility; and lastly, Mademoiselle in a sort of elderly walking-dress and with blue spectacles. And all this incongruous impossible world went tumbling and dancing and going hand in hand, in flying circles to the music; until it was enough to make one forget one was in this wicked world, with Conservative majorities and Presidents MacMahon and all other abominations about one.

Also last night will be memorable to me for another reason, Madame Zassetsky having given me a light as to my own intellect. They were talking about things in history remaining in their minds because they had assisted them to generalisations. And I began to explain how things remained in my mind yet more vividly for no reason at all. She got interested and made me give her several examples; then she said, with her little falsetto of discovery, "Mais c'est que vous êtes tout simplement enfant!" This *mot* I have reflected on at leisure and there is some truth in it. Long may I be so. Yesterday too I finished *Ordered South* and at last had some pleasure and contentment with it. S. C. has sent it off to Macmillan's

1874 ÆT. 23 this morning and I hope it may be accepted; I don't care whether it is or no except for the all important lucre; the end of it is good, whether the able-editor sees it or no.

Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *February 22nd, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am glad to hear you are better again: nobody can expect to be *quite* well in February, that is the only consolation I can offer you.

Madame Garschine is ill, I am sorry to say, and was confined to bed all yesterday, which made a great difference to our little society. À propos of which, what keeps me here is just precisely the said society. These people are so nice and kind and intelligent, and then as I shall never see them any more I have a disagreeable feeling about making the move. With ordinary people in England, you have more or less chance of re-encountering one another; at least you may see their death in the papers; but with these people, they die for me and I die for them when we separate.

Andrew Lang, O you of little comprehension, called on Colvin.

You had not told me before about the fatuous person who thought *Roads* like Ruskin—surely the vaguest of contemporaneous humanity. Again my letter writing is of an enfeebled sort.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *March 1st, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—The weather is again beautiful, soft, warm, cloudy and soft again, in provincial sense. Very interesting, I find Robertson; and Dugald Stewart's life of him a source of unquenchable laughter. Dugald Stewart is not much better than McCrie, and puts me much in mind of him. By the way, I want my father to find out whether any more of Knox's Works was ever issued than the five volumes, as I have them. There are some letters that I am very anxious to see, not printed in any of the five, and perhaps still in MS.

I suppose you are now home again in Auld Reekie: that abode of bliss does not much attract me yet a bit.

Colvin leaves at the end of this week, I fancy.

How badly yours sincerely writes. O! Madame Zassetsky has a theory that *Dumbarton Drums* is an epitome of my character and talents. She plays it, and goes into ecstasies over it, taking everybody to witness that each note, as she plays it, is the moral of Berecchino. Berecchino is my stereotype name in the world now. I am announced as M. Berecchino; a German hand-maiden came to the hotel, the other night, asking for M. Berecchino; said hand-maiden supposing in good faith that sich was my name.

Your letter come. O, I am all right now about the parting, because it will not be death, as we are to write. Of course the correspondence will drop off: but that 's no odds, it breaks the back of the trouble.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *Mondav, March 9th, 1874.*

WE have all been getting photographed and the proofs are to be seen to-day. How they will look I know not. Madame Zassetsky arranged me for mine, and then said to the photographer: "*C'est mon fils. Il vient d'avoir dix-neuf ans. Il est tout fier de sa moustache. Tâchez de la faire paraître,*" and then bolted leaving me solemnly alone with the artist. The artist was quite serious, and explained that he would try to "*faire ressortir ce que veut Madame la Princesse*" to the best of his ability; he bowed very much to me, after this, in quality of Prince you see. I bowed in return and handled the flap of my cloak after the most princely fashion I could command.—Ever your affectionate son, R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[MENTON], *March 20, 1874.*

I. *My Cloak.*—An exception occurs to me to the frugality described a letter (or may be two) ago; my cloak; it would certainly have been possible to have got something less expensive; still it is a fine thought for absent parents that their son possesses simply THE GREATEST vestment in Mentone. It is great in size, and unspeakably great in design; quâ raiment, it has not its equal.

. . . .

III. *About Spain.*—Well, I don't know about *me* and Spain. I am certainly in no humour and in no state of health for voyages and travels. Towards the end of May (see end), up to which time I seem to see my plans, I might be up to it, or I might not; I think *not* myself. I have given up all idea of going on to Italy, though it seems a pity when one is so near; and Spain seems to me in the same category. But for all that, it need not interfere with your voyage thither: I would not lose the chance, if I wanted.

IV. *Money.*—I am much obliged. That makes £180 now. This money irks me, one feels it more than when living at home. However, if I have health, I am in a fair way to make a bit of a livelihood for myself. Now please don't take this up wrong; don't suppose I am thinking of the transaction between you and me; I think of the transaction between me and mankind. I think of all this money wasted in keeping up a structure that may never be worth it—all this good money sent after bad. I shall be seriously angry if you take me up wrong.

V. *Roads.*—The familiar false concord is not certainly a form of colloquialism that I should feel inclined to encourage. It is very odd; I wrote it very carefully, and you seem to have read it very carefully, and yet none of us found it out. The Deuce is in it.

VI. *Russian Prince.*—A cousin of these ladies is come to stay with them—Prince Léon Galitzin. He is the image of—whom?—guess now—do you give it up?—Hillhouse.

VII. *Miscellaneous.*—I send you a pikter of me in the cloak. I think it is like a hunchback. The moustache is clearly visible to the naked eye—O diable! what do I hear in my lug? A mosquito—the first of the season. Bad luck to him!

1874 ÆT. 23 Goodnicht and joy be wi' you a'. I am going to bed.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Note to III.—I had counted on being back at Embro' by the last week or so of May.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[MENTON, *April, 1874*], *Monday.*

MY last night at Mentone. I cannot tell how strange and sad I feel. I leave behind me a dear friend whom I have but little hope of seeing again between the eyes.

To-day, I hadn't arranged all my plans till five o'clock: I hired a poor old cabman, whose uncomfortable vehicle and sorry horse made every one despise him, and set off to get money and say farewells. It was a dark misty evening; the mist was down over all the hills; the peach-trees in beautiful pink bloom. Arranged my plans; that merits a word by the way if I can be bothered. I have half arranged to go to Göttingen in summer to a course of lectures. Galitzin is responsible for this. He tells me the professor is to law what Darwin has been to Natural History, and I should like to understand Roman Law and a knowledge of law is so necessary for all I hope to do.

My poor old cabman; his one horse made me three-quarters of an hour too late for dinner, but I had not the heart to discharge him and take another. Poor soul, he was so pleased with his pourboire, I have made Madame Zassetsky promise to employ him often; so he will be something the better for me, little as he will know it.

I have read *Ordered South;* it is pretty decent I think, but poor, stiff, limping stuff at best—not half so well straightened up as *Roads*. However the stuff is good.

God help us all, this is a rough world: address Hotel St. Romain, rue St. Roch, Paris. I draw the line: a chapter finished. — Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The line.

That bit of childishness has made me laugh, do you blame me?

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Written in Paris on his way home to Edinburgh. Some of our talk at Mentone had run on the scheme of a spectacle play on the story of the burning of the temple of Diana at Ephesus by Herostratus, the type of insane vanity *in excelsis.*

[HOTEL ST. ROMAIN, PARIS,
end of April, 1874.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am a great deal better, but still have to take care. I have got quite a lot of Victor Hugo done; and not I think so badly: pitching into this work has straightened me up a good deal. It is the devil's own weather but that is a trifle. I must know when *Cornhill* must see it. I can send some of it in a week easily, but I still have to read *The Laughing Man,*[1] and I mean to wait until I get to London and have the loan of that from you. If I buy anything more this production will not pay itself. The first part is not too well written, though it has good stuff in it.

My people have made no objection to my going to Göttingen; but my body has made I think very strong objec-

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[1] *L'Homme qui rit.*

1874 ÆT. 23 tions. And you know if it is cold here, it must be colder there. It is a sore pity; that was a great chance for me, and it is gone. I know very well that between Galitzen and this swell professor I should have become a good specialist in law and how that would have changed and bettered all my work it is easy to see; however I must just be content to live as I have begun, an ignorant, *chic*-y penny-a-liner. May the Lord have mercy on my soul!

Going home not very well is an astonishing good hold for me. I shall simply be a prince.

Have you had any thought about Diana of the Ephesians? I will straighten up a play for you, but it may take years. A play is a thing just like a story, it begins to disengage itself and then unrolls gradually in block. It will disengage itself some day for me and then I will send you the nugget and you will see if you can make anything out of it.—Ever yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Mr. John Morley had asked for a notice by R. L. S. for the *Fortnightly Review*, which he was then editing, of Lord Lytton's newly published volume, *Fables in Song*.

SWANSTON, LOTHIANBURN, EDINBURGH
[*May, 1874*].

ALL right. I 'll see what I can do. Before I could answer I had to see the book; and my good father, after trying at all our libraries, bought it for me. I like the book; that is some of it and I 'll try to lick up four or five pages for the *Fortnightly*.

It is still as cold as cold, hereaway. And the Spring hammering away at the New Year in despite. Poor

Spring, scattering flowers with red hands and preparing for Summer's triumphs all in a shudder herself. Health still good, and the humour for work enduring. 1874 ÆT. 23

Jenkin wrote to say he would second me in such a kind little notelet. I shall go in for it (the Savile I mean) whether *Victor Hugo* is accepted or not, being now a man of means. Have I told you by the way that I have now an income of £84, or as I prefer to put it for dignity's sake, two thousand one hundred francs, a year.

In lively hope of better weather and your arrival hereafter, I remain yours ever, R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

SWANSTON, *Friday, May, 1874.*

"MY dear Stevenson how do you do? do you annoying yourself or no? when we go to the Olivses it allways rememberse us you. Nelly and my aunt went away. And when the organ come and play the Soldaten it mak us think of Nelly. It is so sad! allmoste went away. I make my baths; and then we go to Franzensbad; will you come to see us?"

There is Pella's letter fac-simile, punctuation, spelling and all. Mme. Garschine's was rather sad and gave me the blues a bit; I think it very likely I may run over to Franzensbad for a week or so this autumn, if I am wanted that is to say: I shall be able to afford it easily.

I have got on rather better with *Fables;* perhaps it won't be a failure, though I fear. To-day the sun shone brightly although the wind was cold: I was up the hill a good time. It is very solemn to see the top of one hill stead-

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fastly regarding you over the shoulder of another: I never before to-day fully realised the haunting of such a gigantic face, as it peers over into a valley and seems to command all corners. I had a long talk with the shepherd about foreign lands, and sheep. A Russian had once been on the farm as a pupil; he told me that he had the utmost pity for the Russian's capacities, since (dictionary and all) he had never managed to understand him; it must be remembered that my friend the shepherd spoke Scotch of the broadest and often enough employs words which I do not understand myself. R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Enclosing Mr. Leslie Stephen's letter accepting the article on Victor Hugo: the first of Stevenson's many contributions to the *Cornhill Magazine*.

[EDINBURGH, *May, 1874*.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I send you L. Stephen's letter which is certainly very kind and jolly to get.[1] I wrote some stuff about Lord Lytton, but I had not the heart to

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[1] This letter, accepting the first contribution of R. L. S., has by an accident been preserved, and is so interesting, both for its occasion and for the light it throws on the writer's care and kindness as an editor, that by permission of his representatives I here print it. '93 stands, of course, for the novel *Quatre-vingt Treize*.

15 WATERLOO PLACE, S. W., *15/5/74*.

DEAR SIR,—I have read with great interest your article on Victor Hugo and also that which appeared in the last number of *Macmillan*. I shall be happy to accept Hugo and if I have been rather long in answering you, it is only because I wished to give a second reading to the article, and have lately been very much interrupted.

I will now venture to make a few remarks, and by way of preface I must say that I do not criticise you because I take a low view of your

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submit it to you. I sent it direct to Morley, with a Spartan billet. God knows it is bad enough; but it cost me labour incredible. I was so out of the vein, it would have made you weep to see me digging the rubbish out of my seven wits with groanings unutterable. I certainly mean to come to London, and likely before long if all goes well; so on that ground, I cannot force you to come to Scotland. Still, the weather is now warm and jolly, and of course it would not be expensive to live here so long as that did not bore you. If you could see the hills out of my window to-night, you would start incontinent. However do

powers: but for the very contrary reason. I think very highly of the promise shown in your writings and therefore think it worth while to write more fully than I can often to contributors. Nor do I set myself up as a judge — I am very sensible of my own failings in the critical department and merely submit what has occurred to me for your consideration.

I fully agree with the greatest portion of your opinions and think them very favourably expressed. The following points struck me as doubtful when I read and may perhaps be worth notice.

First, you seem to make the distinction between dramatic and novelistic art coincide with the distinction between romantic and 18th century. This strikes me as doubtful, as at least to require qualification. To my mind Hugo is far more dramatic in spirit than Fielding, though his method involves (as you show exceedingly well) a use of scenery and background which would hardly be admissible in drama. I am not able — I fairly confess — to define the dramatic element in Hugo or to say why I think it absent from Fielding and Richardson. Yet surely Hugo's own dramas are a sufficient proof that a drama may be romantic as well as a novel: though, of course, the pressure of the great moral forces, etc., must be indicated by different means. The question is rather a curious one and too wide to discuss in a letter. I merely suggest what seems to me to be an obvious criticism on your argument.

Secondly, you speak very sensibly of the melodramatic and claptrap element in Hugo. I confess that it seems to me to go deeper into his

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as you will, and if the mountain will not come to Mahomet Mahomet will come to the mountain in due time, Mahomet being me and the mountain you, Q.E.D., F.R.S.—Ever yours,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[SWANSTON, *May, 1874*], *Sunday*.

THE white mist has obliterated the hills and lies heavily round the cottage, as though it were laying siege to it; the trees wave their branches in the wind with a solemn melancholy manner, like people swaying themselves to

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work than you would apparently allow. I think it, for example, very palpable even in *Notre Dame*, and I doubt the historical fidelity, though my ignorance of mediæval history prevents me from putting my finger on many faults. The consequence is that in my opinion you are scarcely just to Scott or Fielding as compared with Hugo. Granting fully his amazing force and fire, he seems to me to be deficient often in that kind of healthy realism which is so admirable in Scott's best work. For example, though my Scotch blood (for I can boast of some) may prejudice me I am profoundly convinced that Balfour of Burley would have knocked M. Lantenac into a cocked hat and stormed la Tourgue if it had been garrisoned by 19 × 19 French spouters of platitude in half the time that Gauvain and Cimourdain took about it. In fact, Balfour seems to me to be flesh and blood and Gauvain & Co. to be too often mere personified bombast: and therefore I fancy that *Old Mortality* will outlast '93, though *Notre Dame* is far better than *Quentin Durward,* and *Les Misérables,* perhaps, better than any. This is, of course, fair matter of opinion.

Thirdly, I don't think that you quite bring out your meaning in saying that '93 is a decisive symptom. I confess that I don't quite see in what sense it decides precisely what question. A sentence or so would clear this up.

Fourthly, as a matter of form, I think (but I am very doubtful) that it might possibly have been better not to go into each novel in succes-

and fro in pain. I am alone in the house, all the world being gone to church; and even in here at the side of the fire, the air clings about one like a wet blanket. Yet this morning, when I was just awake, I had thought it was going to be a fine day. First, a cock crew, loudly and beautifully and often; then followed a long interval of silence and darkness, the grey morning began to get into my room; and then from the other side of the garden, a blackbird executed one long flourish, and in a moment as if a spring had been touched or a sluice-gate opened, the whole garden just brimmed and ran over with bird-songs.—Ever your faithful friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

sion: but to group the substance of your remarks a little differently. Of course I don't want you to alter the form, I merely notice the point as suggesting a point in regard to any future article.

Many of your criticisms in detail strike me as very good. I was much pleased by your remarks on the storm in the *Travailleurs.* There was another very odd storm, as it struck me on a hasty reading, in '93, where there is mention of a beautiful summer evening and yet the wind is so high that you can't hear the tocsin. You do justice also and more than justice to Hugo's tenderness about children. That, I think, points to one great source of his power.

It would be curious to compare Hugo to a much smaller man, Chas. Reade, who is often a kind of provincial or *Daily Telegraph* Hugo. However, that would hardly do in the *Cornhill.* I shall send your article to the press and hope to use it in July. Any alterations can be made when the article is in type, if any are desirable. I cannot promise definitely in advance; but at any rate it shall appear as soon as may be.

Excuse this long rigmarole and believe me to be, yours very truly,

LESLIE STEPHEN.

I shall hope to hear from you again. If ever you come to town you will find me at 8 Southwell Gardens (close to the Gloucester Road Station of the Underground). I am generally at home except from 3 to 5.

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TO MRS. SITWELL

For a part of June Stevenson had come south, spending most of his time in lodgings with me at Hampstead (where he got the idea for part of his essay, *Notes on the Movements of Young Children*) and making his first appearance at the Savile Club. Trouble awaited him after his return.

[SWANSTON, *June, 1874*], *Wednesday*.

NEWS reaches me that Bob is laid down with diphtheria; and you know what that means.

Night.—I am glad to say that I have on the whole a good account of Bob and I do hope he may pull through in spite of all. I went down and saw the doctor; but it is not thought right that I should go in to see him in case of contagion: you know it is a very contagious malady.

Thursday.—It is curious how calm I am in such a case. I wait in perfect composure for farther news; I can do nothing; why should I disturb myself? And yet if things go wrong I shall be in a fine way I can tell you.

How curiously we are built up into our false positions. The other day, having toothache and the black dog on my back generally, I was rude to one of the servants at the dinner-table. And nothing of course can be more disgusting than for a man to speak harshly to a young woman who will lose her place if she speak back to him; and of course I determined to apologise. Well, do you know, it was perhaps four days before I found courage enough, and I felt as red and ashamed as could be. Why? because I had been rude? not a bit of it; because I was doing a thing that would be called ridiculous in thus apologising.

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I did not know I had so much respect of middle-class notions before; this is my right hand which I must cut off. Hold the arm please: once—twice—thrice: the offensive member is amputated: let us hope I shall never be such a cad any more as to be ashamed of being a gentleman.

Night.—I suppose I must have been more affected than I thought; at least I found I could not work this morning and had to go out. The whole garden was filled with a high westerly wind, coming straight out of the hills and richly scented with furze—or whins, as we would say. The trees were all in a tempest and roared like a heavy surf; the paths all strewn with fallen apple-blossom and leaves. I got a quiet seat behind a yew and went away into a meditation. I was very happy after my own fashion, and whenever there came a blink of sunshine or a bird whistled higher than usual, or a little powder of white apple-blossom came over the hedge and settled about me in the grass, I had the gladdest little flutter at my heart and stretched myself for very voluptuousness. I wasn't altogether taken up with my private pleasures, however, and had many a look down ugly vistas in the future, for Bob and others. But we must all be content and brave, and look eagerly for these little passages of happiness by the wayside, and go on afterwards, savouring them under the tongue.

Friday.—Our garden has grown beautiful at last, beautiful with fresh foliage and daisied grass. The sky is still cloudy and the day perhaps even a little gloomy; but under this grey roof, in this shaded temperate light, how delightful the new summer is.

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When I shall come to London must always be problematical like all my movements, and of course this sickness of Bob's makes it still more uncertain. If all goes well I may have to go to the country and take care of him in his convalescence. But I shall come shortly. Do not hurry to write me; I had rather *you* had ten minutes more of good, friendly sleep, than I a longer letter; and you know I am rather partial to your letters. Yesterday, by the bye, I received the proof of *Victor Hugo;* it is not nicely written, but the stuff is capital, I think. Modesty is my most remarkable quality, I may remark in passing.

1.30.—I was out, behind the yew hedge, reading the *Contesse de Rudolstadt* when I found my eyes grow weary, and looked up from the book. O the rest of the quiet greens and whites, of the daisied surface! I was very peaceful, but it began to sprinkle rain and so I fain to come in for a moment and chat with you. By the way, I must send you *Consuelo;* you said you had quite forgotten it if I remember aright; and surely a book that could divert me, when I thought myself on the very edge of the grave, from the work that I so much desired and was yet unable to do, and from many painful thoughts, should somewhat support and amuse you under all the hard things that may be coming upon you. If you should wonder why I am writing to you so voluminously, know that it is because I am not suffering myself to work, and in idleness, as in death, etc. . . .

Saturday.—I have had a very cruel day. I heard this morning that yesterday Bob had been very much worse and I went down to Portobello with all sorts of horrible presentiments. I was glad when I turned the corner and saw the blinds still up. He was definitely better, if the word definitely can be used about such a detestably insidious complaint. I have ordered *Consuelo* for you, and you should have it soon this week; I mean next week of course; I am thinking when you will receive this letter, not of now when I am writing it. 1874 ÆT. 23

I am so tired; but I am very hopeful. All will be well some time, if it be only when we are dead. One thing I see so clearly. Death is the end neither of joy nor sorrow. Let us pass into the clouds and come up again as grass and flowers; we shall still be this wonderful, shrinking, sentient matter—we shall still thrill to the sun and grow relaxed and quiet after rain, and have all manner of pains and pleasures that we know not of now. Consciousness, and ganglia, and suchlike, are after all but theories. And who knows? This God may not be cruel when all is done; he may relent and be good to us *à la fin des fins*. Think of how he tempers our afflictions to us, of how tenderly he mixes in bright joys with the grey web of trouble and care that we call our life. Think of how he gives, who takes away. Out of the bottom of the miry clay I write this; and I look forward confidently; I have faith after all; I believe, I hope, I *will* not have it reft from me; there *is* something good behind it all, bitter and terrible as it seems. The infinite majesty (as it will be always in regard to us the bubbles of an hour) the infinite majesty must have moments, if it were no more, of greatness; must sometimes be touched with a feeling for our infirmities, must sometimes relent and be clement to those frail playthings that he has made, and made so bitterly alive. Must it not be so, my dear friend, out of the depths I cry?

1874 ÆT. 23 I feel it, now when I am most painfully conscious of his cruelty. He must relent. He must reward. He must give some indemnity, if it were but in the quiet of a daisy, tasting of the sun, and the soft rain and the sweet shadow of trees, for all the dire fever that he makes us bear in this poor existence. We make too much of this human life of ours. It may be that two clods together, two flowers together, two grown trees together touching each other deliciously with their spread leaves, it may be that these dumb things have their own priceless sympathies, surer and more untroubled than ours.

I don't know quite whether I have wandered. Forgive me, I feel as I had relieved myself; so perhaps it may not be unpleasant for you either.—Believe me, ever your faithful friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

SWANSTON, *Sunday* [*June, 1874*].

DEAR FRIEND,—I fear to have added something to your troubles by telling you of the grief in which I find myself; but one cannot always come to meet a friend smiling, although we should try for the best cheer possible. All to-day I have been very weary, resting myself after the trouble and fatigue of yesterday. The day was warm enough, but it blew a whole gale of wind; and the noise and the purposeless rude violence of it somehow irritated and depressed me. There was good news however, though the anxiety must still be long. O peace, peace, whither are you fled and where have you carried my old quiet humour? I am so bitter and disquiet and speak even spitefully to people. And somehow, though I promise myself amendment, day after day finds me equally rough and sour to those about me. But this would pass with good health and good weather; and at bottom I am not unhappy; the soil is still good although it bears thorns; and the time will come again for flowers.

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Wednesday.—I got your letter this morning and have to thank you so much for it. Bob is much better; and I do hope out of danger. To-day has been more glorious than I can tell you. It has been the first day of blue sky that we have had; and it was happiness for a week to see the clear bright outline of the hills and the glory of sunlit foliage and the darkness of green shadows, and the big white clouds that went voyaging overhead deliberately. My two cousins from Portobello were here: and they and I and Maggie ended the afternoon by lying half an hour together on a shawl. The big cloud had all been carded out into a thin luminous white gauze, miles away; and miles away too seemed the little black birds that passed between this and us as we lay with faces upturned. The similarity of what we saw struck in us a curious similarity of mood; and in consequence of the small size of the shawl, we all lay so close that we half pretended, half felt, we had lost our individualities and had become merged and mixed up in a quadruple existence. We had the shadow of an umbrella over ourselves, and when any one reached out a brown hand into the golden sunlight overhead we all feigned that we did not know whose hand it was, until at last I don't really think we quite did. Little black insects also passed over us and in the same half wanton manner we pretended we could not distinguish them from the birds. There was a splendid sunlit silence about us, and

1874 ÆT. 23 as Katharine said the heavens seemed to be dropping oil on us, or honey-dew—it was all so bland.

Thursday evening.—I have seen Bob again, and I was charmed at his convalescence. Le bon Dieu has been *so* bon this time: here 's his health! Still the danger is not over by a good way; it is so miserable a thing for reverses.

I hear the wind outside roaring among our leafy trees as the surf on some loud shore. The hill-top is whelmed in a passing rain-shower and the mist lies low in the valleys. But the night is warm and in our little sheltered garden it is fair and pleasant, and the borders and hedges and evergreens and boundary trees are all distinct in an equable diffusion of light from the buried moon and the day not altogether passed away. My dear friend, as I hear the wind rise and die away in that tempestuous world of foliage, I seem to be conscious of I know not what breath of creation. I know what this warm wet wind of the west betokens, I know how already, in this morning's sunshine, we could see all the hills touched and accentuated with little delicate golden patches of young fern; how day by day the flowers thicken and the leaves unfold; how already the year is a-tip-toe on the summit of its finished youth; and I am glad and sad to the bottom of my heart at the knowledge. If you knew how different I am from what I was last year; how the knowledge of you has changed and finished me, you would be glad and sad also.—Ever your faithful friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The strain of anxiety recorded in the two last letters had given a shake to Stevenson's own health, and it was agreed that he should go for a yachting tour with Sir Walter Simpson in the Inner Hebrides.

[EDINBURGH, *June, 1874*], *Thursday.*

I HAVE been made so miserable by Chopin's *Marche funèbre.* Try two of Schubert's songs, "*Ich unglückselige Atlas*" and "*Du schönes Fischermädchen*"—they are very jolly. I have read aloud my death-cycle from Walt Whitman this evening. I was very much affected myself, never so much before, and it fetched the auditory considerable. Reading these things that I like aloud when I am painfully excited is the keenest artistic pleasure I know. It does seem strange that these dependent arts—singing, acting, and in its small way reading aloud—seem the best rewarded of all arts. I am sure it is more exciting for me to read than it was for W. W. to write; and how much more must this be so with singing.

Friday.—I am going in the yacht on Wednesday. I am not right yet, and I hope the yacht will set me up. I am too tired to-night to make more of it. Good-bye.—Ever your faithful friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[EDINBURGH, *June, 1874*], *Friday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am seedy—very seedy, I may say. I am quite unfit for any work or any pleasure; and generally very sick. I am going away next week on

1874 ÆT. 23 Wednesday for my cruise which I hope will set me up again. I should like a proof here up to Wednesday morning, or at Greenock, Tontine Hotel, up to Friday morning, as I don't quite know my future address. I hope you are better, and that it was not that spell of work you had that did the harm. It is to my spurt of work that I am *redevable* for my harm. Walt Whitman is at the bottom of it all, *'cré nom!* What a pen I have!—a new pen, God be praised, how smoothly it functions! Would that I could work as well. Chorus—Would that both of us could work as well—would that all of us could work as well!—Ever yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Bob is better; but he might be better yet. All goes smoothly except my murrained health.

TO MRS. SITWELL

SWANSTON [*Summer, 1874*].

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am back again here, as brown as a berry with sun, and in good form. I have been and gone and lost my portmanteau, with *Walt Whitman* in it and a lot of notes. This is a nuisance. However, I am pretty happy, only wearying for news of you and for your address.

Friday.—*À la bonne heure!* I hear where you are and that you are apparently fairish well. That is good at least. I am full of Reformation work; up to the eyes in it; and begin to feel learned. A beautiful day outside, though something cold. R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Of the projects here mentioned, that of the little book of essays on the enjoyment of the world never took shape, nor were those contributions towards it which he printed in the *Portfolio* ever republished until after the writer's death. *The Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland* was printed in 1874, published as a pamphlet in February, 1875, and attracted, I believe, no attention whatever. The *Fables* must have been some of the earliest numbers of the series continued at odd times till near the date of his death and published posthumously: I do not know which, but should guess *The House of Eld, Yellow Paint,* and perhaps those in the vein of Celtic mystery, *The Touchstone, The Poor Thing, The Song of To-morrow.*

[SWANSTON, *Summer, 1874*], *Tuesday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—What is new with you? There is nothing new with me: Knox and his females begin to get out of restraint altogether; the subject expands so damnably, I know not where to cut it off. I have another paper for the PTFL[1] on the stocks: a sequel to the two others; also, that is to say, a word in season as to contentment and a hint to the careless to look around them for disregarded pleasures. Seeley wrote to me asking me "to propose" something: I suppose he means—well, I suppose I don't know what he means. But I shall write to him (if you think it wise) when I send him this paper, saying that my writing is more a matter of God's disposition than of man's proposal; that I had from *Roads* upward ever intended to make a little budget of little papers all with this intention before them, call it ethical or æsthetic as you will; and thus I shall leave it to him (if he likes) to regard this little budget, as slowly they come forth, as a unity in its own small way. Twelve or twenty such

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[1] *Portfolio.*

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essays, some of them mainly ethical and expository, put together in a little book with narrow print in each page, antique, vine leaves about, and the following title.

XII (or XX) ESSAYS ON THE ENJOYMENT
OF THE WORLD:

By Robert Louis Stevenson

(A motto in italics)

Publisher
Place and date

You know the class of old book I have in my head. I smack my lips; would it not be nice! I am going to launch on Scotch ecclesiastical affairs, in a tract addressed to the Clergy; in which doctrinal matters being laid aside, I contend simply that they should be just and dignified men at a certain crisis: this for the honour of humanity. Its authorship must, of course, be secret or the publication would be useless. You shall have a copy of course, and may God help you to understand it.

I have done no more to my *Fables*. I find I must let things take their time. I am constant to my schemes; but I must work at them fitfully as the humour moves.

—To return, I wonder, if I have to make a budget of such essays as I dream, whether Seeley would publish them: I should give them unity, you know, by the doctrinal essays; nor do I think these would be the least agreeable. You must give me your advice and tell me whether I should throw out this delicate feeler to R. S.[1]; or if not, what I am to say to this "proposal" business.

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[1] Richmond Seeley.

I shall go to England or Wales, with parents, shortly: after which, dash to Poland before setting in for the dismal session at Edinburgh. 1874 ÆT. 23

Spirits good, with a general sense of hollowness underneath: wanity of wanities etc.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Parents capital; thanks principally to them; yours truly still rather bitter, but less so.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The last paragraph of the following means that Dr. Appleton, the amiable and indefatigable editor of the *Academy*, then recently founded, had been a little disturbed in mind by some of the contributions of his brilliant young friend, but allowed his academic conscience to be salved by the fact of their signature.

[SWANSTON, *Summer, 1874*.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Am I mad? Have I lived thus long and have you known me thus long, to no purpose? Do you imagine I could ever write an essay a month, or promise an essay even every three months? I declare I would rather die than enter into any such arrangement. The Essays must fall from me, Essay by Essay, as they ripen; and all that my communication with Seeley would effect would be to make him see more in them than mere occasional essays; or at least *look* far more faithfully, in which spirit men rarely look in vain. You know both *Roads* and my little girls[1] are a part of the scheme which dates from early at Mentone. My word to Seeley, therefore, would be to inform him of what I hope will lie ultimately behind

[1] The essay *Notes on the Movements of Young Children.*

1874 ÆT. 23 them, of how I regard them as contributions towards a friendlier and more thoughtful way of looking about one, etc. One other purpose of telling him would be that I should feel myself more at liberty to write as I please, and not bound to drag in a tag about Art every time to make it more suitable. Tying myself down to time is an impossibility. You know my own description of myself as a person with a poetic character and no poetic talent; just as my prose muse has all the ways of a poetic one, and I must take my Essays as they come to me. If I got 12 of 'em done in two years, I should be pleased. Never, please, let yourself imagine that I am fertile; I am constipated in the brains.

Look here, Appleton dined here last night and was delightful after the manner of our Appleton: I was none the less pleased, because I was somewhat amused, to hear of your kind letter to him in defence of my productions. I was amused at the tranquil dishonesty with which he told me that I must put my name to all I write and then all will be well.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

Friday [*August 10, 1874*].

YESTERDAY received the letter you know of. I have finished my *Portfolio* paper, not very good but with things in it: I don't know if they will take it; and I have got a good start made with my *John Knox* articles. The weather here is rainy and miserable and windy: it is warm and not over boisterous for a certain sort of pleasure. This place, as I have made my first real inquisition into it to-night, is curious enough; all the days I have been here, I have been at work, and so I was quite new to it. 1874 ÆT. 23

Saturday.—A most beautiful day. We took a most beautiful drive, also up the banks of the river. The heather and furze are in flower at once and make up a splendid richness of colour on the hills; the trees were beautiful; there was a bit of winding road with larches on one hand and oaks on the other; the oaks were in shadow and printed themselves off at every corner on the sunlit background of the larches. We passed a little family of children by the roadside. The youngest of all sat a good way apart from the others on the summit of a knoll; it was ensconced in an old tea-box, out of which issued its head and shoulders in a blue cloak and scarlet hat. O if you could have seen its dignity! It was deliciously humorous: and this little piece of comic self-satisfaction was framed in wonderfully by the hills and the sunlit estuary. We saw another child in a cottage garden. She had been sick, it seemed, and was taking the air quietly for health's sake. Over her pale face, she had decorated herself with all available flowers and weeds; and she was driving one chair as a horse, sitting in another by way of carriage. We cheered her as we passed, and she acknowledged the compliment like a queen. I like children better every day, I think, and most other things less. *John Knox* goes on, and a horrible story of a nurse which I think almost too cruel to go on with: I wonder why my stories are always so nasty.[1] I am still well, and in good spirits. I say, by the way, have you any means of finding Madame Garschine's address? If you have, communicate with me.

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[1] I remember nothing of either the title or the tenor of this story.

I fear my last letter has been too late to catch her at Franzensbad; and so I shall have to go without my visit altogether, which would vex me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[BARMOUTH, *September, 1874*], *Tuesday*.

I WONDER if you ever read Dickens' Christmas books? I don't know that I would recommend you to read them, because they are too much perhaps. I have only read two of them yet, and feel so good after them and would do anything, yes and shall do anything, to make it a little better for people. I wish I could lose no time; I want to go out and comfort some one; I shall never listen to the nonsense they tell one about not giving money—I *shall* give money; not that I haven't done so always, but I shall do it with a high hand now.

It is raining here; and I have been working at *John Knox*, and at the horrid story I have in hand, and walking in the rain. Do you know this story of mine is horrible; I only work at it by fits and starts, because I feel as if it were a sort of crime against humanity—it is so cruel.

Wednesday.—I saw such nice children again to-day; one little fellow alone by the roadside, putting a stick into a spout of water and singing to himself—so wrapt up that we had to poke him with our umbrellas to attract his attention; and again, two solid, fleshly, grave, double-chinned burgomasters in black, with black hats on 'em, riding together in what they call, I think, a double peram-

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bulator. My father is such fun here. He is always skipping about into the drawing-room, and speaking to all the girls, and telling them God knows what about us all. My mother and I are the old people who sit aloof, receive him as a sort of prodigal when he comes back to us, and listen indulgently to what he has to tell.

LLANDUDNO, *Thursday.*—A cold bleak place of stucco villas with wide streets to let the wind in at you. A beautiful journey, however, coming hither.

Friday.—Seeley has taken my paper, which is, as I now think, not to beat about the bush, bad. However, there are pretty things in it, I fancy; we shall see what you shall say.

Sunday.—I took my usual walk before turning in last night, and dallied over it a little. It was a cool, dark, solemn night, starry, but the sky charged with big black clouds. The lights in house windows you could see, but the houses themselves were lost in the general blackness. A church clock struck eleven as I went past, and rather startled me. The whiteness of the road was all I had to go by. I heard an express train roaring away down the coast into the night, and dying away sharply in the distance; it was like the noise of an enormous rocket, or a shot world, one would fancy. I suppose the darkness made me a little fanciful; but when at first I was puzzled by this great sound in the night, between sea and hills, I thought half seriously that it might be a world broken loose—this world to wit. I stood for I suppose five seconds with this looking-for of destruction in my head, not

1874 ÆT. 23 exactly frightened but put out; and I wanted badly not to be overwhelmed where I was, unless I could cry out a farewell with a great voice over the ruin and make myself heard.—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

Mr. (later Sir) George Grove was for some years before and after this date the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* (but the true monument to his memory is of course his *Dictionary of Music*). After the Knox articles no more contributions from R. L. S. appeared in this magazine, partly, I think, because Mr. Alexander Macmillan disapproved of his essay on Burns published the following year. The *Portfolio* paper here mentioned is that entitled *On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places.*

[SWANSTON, *Autumn, 1874*], *Thursday.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have another letter from Grove, about my *John Knox*, which is flattering in its way: he is a very gushing and spontaneous person. I am busy with another *Portfolio* paper for which I can find no name; I think I shall require to leave it without.

I am afraid I shall not get to London on my way to Poland, but I must try to manage it on my way back; I must see you anyway, before I tackle this sad winter work, just to get new heart. As it is, I am as jolly as three, in good health, fairish working trim and on good, very good, terms with my people.

Look here, I must have people well. If they will keep well, I am all right: if they won't—well I 'll do as well as I can, and forgive them, and try to be something of a comfortable thought in spite. So with that cheerful sentiment, good-night dear friend and good health to you.

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Saturday.—Your letter to-day. Thank you. It is a horrid day, outside. You talk of my setting to a book, as if I could; don't you know that things must *come* to me? I can do but little; I mostly wait and look out. I am struggling with a *Portfolio* paper just now, which will not come straight somehow and *will* get too gushy; but a little patience will get it out of the kink and sober it down I hope. I have been thinking over my movements, and am not sure that I may get to London on my way to Poland after all. Hurrah! But we must not halloo till we are out of the wood; this may be only a clearing.

God help us all, it is a funny world. To see people skipping all round us with their eyes sealed up with indifference, knowing nothing of the earth or man or woman, going automatically to offices and saying they are happy or unhappy out of a sense of duty, I suppose, surely at least from no sense of happiness or unhappiness, unless perhaps they have a tooth that twinges, is it not like a bad dream? Why don't they stamp their foot upon the ground and awake? There is the moon rising in the east, and there is a person with their heart broken and still glad and conscious of the world's glory up to the point of pain; and behold they know nothing of all this! I should like to kick them into consciousness, for damp gingerbread puppets as they are. S. C. is down on me for being bitter; who can help it sometimes, especially after they have slept ill?

I am going to have a lot of lunch presently; and then I shall feel all right again, and the loneliness will pass away as often before. It is the flesh that is weak. Already I have done myself all the good in the world by this scribble, and feel alive again and pretty jolly.

1874 ÆT. 23 *Sunday.*—What a day! Cold and dark as midwinter. I shall send with this two new photographs of myself for your opinion. My father regards this life "as a shambling sort of omnibus which is taking him to his hotel." Is that not well said? It came out in a rather pleasant and entirely amicable discussion which we had this afternoon on a walk. The colouring of the world, to-day, is of course hideous; we saw only one pleasant sight, a couple of lovers under a thorn-tree by the wayside, he with his arm about her waist: they did not seem to find it so cold as we. I have made a lot of progress to-day with my *Portfolio* paper. I think some of it should be nice, but it rambles a little; I like rambling, if the country be pleasant; don't you?—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[*October 27, 1874*], EDINBURGH, *Thursday.*

IT is cold, but very sunshiny and dry; I wish you were here; it would suit you and it doesn't suit me; if we could change? This is the Fast day—Thursday preceding bi-annual Holy Sacrament that is—nobody does any work, they go to Church twice, they read nothing secular (except the newspapers, that is the nuance between Fast day and Sunday), they eat like fighting-cocks. Behold how good a thing it is and becoming well to fast in Scotland. I am progressing with *John Knox and Women* No. 2; I shall finish it, I think, in a fortnight hence; and then I shall begin to enjoy myself. *J. K. and W.* No. 2 is not uninteresting however; it only bores me because I am so anxious to be at something else which I like better. I shall perhaps go to Church this afternoon from a sort of feeling that it is rather a wholesome thing to do of an afternoon; it keeps one from work and it lets you out so late that you cannot weary yourself walking and so spoil your evening's work.

Friday.—I got your letter this morning, and whether owing to that, or to the fact that I had spent the evening before in comparatively riotous living, I managed to work five hours and a half well and without fatigue; besides reading about an hour more at history. This is a thing to be proud of.

We have had lately some of the most beautiful sunsets; our autumn sunsets here are always admirable in colour. To-night there was just a little lake of tarnished green deepening into a blood-orange at the margins, framed above by dark clouds and below by the long roof-line of the Egyptian buildings on what we called the Mound, the statues on the top (of her Britannic Majesty and diverse nondescript Sphinxes) printing themselves off black against the lit space.

Saturday.—It has been colder than ever; and to-night there is a truculent wind about the house, shaking the windows and making a hollow inarticulate grumbling in the chimney. I cannot say how much I hate the cold. It makes my scalp so tight across my head and gives me such a beastly rheumatism about my shoulders, and wrinkles and stiffens my face; O I have such a *Sehnsucht* for Mentone, where the sun is shining and the air still, and (a friend writes to me) people are complaining of the heat.

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Sunday.—I was chased out by my lamp again last night; it always goes out when I feel in the humour to write to you. To-day I have been to Church, which has not improved my temper I must own. The clergyman did his best to make me hate him, and I took refuge in that admirable poem the Song of Deborah and Barak; I should like to make a long scroll of painting (say to go all round a cornice) illustrative of this poem; with the people seen in the distance going stealthily on footpaths while the great highways go vacant; with the archers besetting the draw-wells; with the princes in hiding on the hills among the bleating sheep-flocks; with the overthrow of Sisera, the stars fighting against him in their courses and that ancient river, the river Kishon, sweeping him away in anger; with his mother looking and looking down the long road in the red sunset, and never a banner and never a spear-clump coming into sight, and her women with white faces round her, ready with lying comfort. To say nothing of the people on white asses.

O, I do hate this damned life that I lead. Work—work—work; that 's all right, it 's amusing; but I want women about me and I want pleasure. John Knox had a better time of it than I, with his godly females all leaving their husbands to follow after him; I would I were John Knox; I hate living like a hermit. Write me a nice letter if ever you are in the humour to write me, and it doesn't hurt your head. Good-bye. — Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The projected visit to his Russian friend in Poland did not come off, and shortly after the preceding letter Stevenson went for a few days' walking tour in the Chiltern Hills of Buckinghamshire, as recorded in his essay *An Autumn Effect*. He then came on for a visit to London.

[LONDON, *November, 1874*.]

WHEN I left you I found an organ-grinder in Russell Square playing to a child; and the simple fact that there was a child listening to him, that he was giving this pleasure, entitled him, according to my theory, as you know, to some money; so I put some coppers on the ledge of his organ, without so much as looking at him, and I was going on when a woman said to me: "Yes sir, he do look bad, don't he? scarcely fit like to be working." And then I looked at the man, and O! he was so ill, so yellow and heavy-eyed and drooping. I did not like to go back somehow, and so I gave the woman a shilling and asked her to give it to him for me. I saw her do so and walked on; but the face followed me, and so when I had got to the end of the division, I turned and came back as hard as I could and filled his hand with money—ten to thirteen shillings, I should think. I was sure he was going to be ill, you know, and he was a young man; and I dare say he was alone, and had no one to love him.

I had my reward; for a few yards farther on, here was another organ-grinder playing a dance tune, and perhaps a dozen children all dancing merrily to his music, singly, and by twos and threes, and in pretty little figures together. Just what my organ-grinder in my story wanted to have happen to him! It was so gay and pleasant in the twilight under the street lamp.

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I am very well, have eaten well and am so sleepy I can write no more. This I write to let you know I am no worse; all the better.—Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[EDINBURGH, *November, 1874*], *Sunday.*

I WAS never more sorry to leave you, but I never left you with a better heart, than last night. I had a long journey and a cold one; but never was sick nor sorry the whole way. It was a long one because when we got to Berwick, we had to go round through the hills by Kelso, as there was a block on the main line. I knew nothing of this, and you may imagine my bewilderment when I came to myself, the train standing and whistling dismally in the black morning, before a little vacant half-lit station, with a name up that I had never heard before. My fellow-traveller woke up and wanted to know what was wrong. "O, it 's nothing," I said, "nothing at all, it 's an evil dream." However we had the thing explained to us at the end of ends, and trailed on in the dark among the snowy hills, stopping every now and again and whistling in an appealing kind of way, as much as to say, "God knows where we are, for God's sake don't run into us;" until at last we came to a dead standstill, and remained so for perhaps an hour and a quarter. This wakened us up for a little; and we managed, at last, to attract the attention of one of the officials whom we could see picking their way about the snow with lanterns. This man (very wide awake, and hale, and lusty) informed us we were waiting for another conductor, as our own guard did not know the line. "Where is the new guard coming from?" we ask. "O, close by; only—he, he—he was married last night." And immediately we heard much hoarse laughter in the dark about us; and the moving lanterns were shaken to and fro, as if in a wind. This poor conductor! However, I recomposed myself for slumber, and did not reawake much before Edinburgh, where I was discharged three hours too late and found my father waiting for me in the snow, with a very long face.—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I forget what the Japanese prints were which I had been sending to Stevenson at his wish, but they sound like specimens of Hiroshigé and Kuniyoshi. The taste for these things was then quite new and had laid hold on him strongly.

[EDINBURGH, *November, 1874*.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thank you, and God bless you for ever: this is a far better lot than the last; I have chosen four complete sets out of it for setting, quite admirable: the others are not quite one's taste; I find the colour far from always being agreeable, it is a great toss up. They have sent me duplicates of first a mad little scene with a white horse, a red monarch and a blue arm of the sea in it; and second of a night scene with water, flowers and a black and white umbrella and a wonderful grey distance and a wonderful general effect—one of my best in fact. Do not now force yourself to make any more purchases for me; but if ever you see a thing you would like to lecture off, remember I am the person who is ready

1874 ÆT. 24 to buy it and let you have the use of it: keep this in view *always*.

I am working very hard (for me) and am very happy over my picters.

Good-bye, *mon vieux*.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—In fact if ever you see anything exceptionally fine, purchase for R. L. S. I owe you lots of money besides this, don't I? *John Knox* is red and sparkling on the anvil and the hammer goes about six hours on him.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

During his days in London Stevenson had gone with Mrs. Sitwell to revisit the Elgin marbles, and had carried off photographs of them to put up in his room at Edinburgh. *King Matthias's Hunting Horn* has perished like so many other stories of this time.

[EDINBURGH, *November, 1874*], *Tuesday*.

WELL, I've got some women now, and they're better than nothing. Three, without heads, who have been away getting framed. And you know they are more to me, after a fashion, than they can be to you, because, after a fashion also, they are women. I have come now to think the sitting figure in spite of its beautiful drapery rather a blemish, rather an interruption to the sentiment. The two others are better than one has ever dreamed; I think these two women are the only things in the world that have been better than, in Bible phrase, it had entered into my heart to conceive. Who made them? Was it Pheidias?

or do they not know? It is wonderful what company they are—noble company. And then I have now three Japanese pictures that are after my own heart, and I get up from time to time and turn a bit of favourite colour over and over, roll it under my tongue, savour it till it gets all through me; and then back to my chair and to work.

This afternoon about six there was a small orange moon, lost in a great world of blue evening. A few leafless boughs, and a bit of garden railing, crisscross its face; and below it there was blueness and the spread lights of Leith, lost in blue haze. To the east, the town, also subdued to the same blue, piled itself up, with here and there a lit window, until it could print off its outline against a faint patch of green and russet that remained behind the sunset.

I must tell you about my way of life, which is regular to a degree. Breakfast 8.30; during breakfast and my smoke afterwards till ten, when I begin work, I read Reformation; from ten, I work until about a quarter to one; from one until two, I lunch and read a book on Schopenhauer or one on Positivism; two to three work, three to six anything; if I am in before six, I read about Japan: six, dinner and a pipe with my father and coffee until 7.30; 7.30 to 9.30, work; after that either supper and a pipe at home, or out to Simpson's or Baxter's: bed between eleven and twelve.

Wednesday.—Two good things have arrived to me to-day: your letter for one, and the end of *John Knox* for another. I cannot write English because I have been speaking French all evening with some French people of my knowledge. It's a sad thing the state I get into, when

I cannot remember English and yet do not know French! And it is worse when it is complicated, as at present, with a pen that will not write! If you knew how I have to paint and how I have to manœuvre to get the stuff legible at all.

Thursday.—I have said the Fates are only women after a fashion; and that is one of the strangest things about them. They are wonderfully womanly—they are more womanly than any woman—and those girt draperies are drawn over a wonderful greatness of body instinct with sex; I do not see a line in them that could be a line in a man. And yet, when all is said, they are not women for us; they are of another race, immortal, separate; one has no wish to look at them with love, only with a sort of lowly adoration, physical, but wanting what is the soul of all love, whether admitted to oneself or not, hope; in a word "the desire of the moth for the star." O great white stars of eternal marble, O shapely, colossal women, and yet not women. It is not love that we seek from them, we do not desire to seek their great eyes troubled with our passions, or the great impassive members contorted by any hope or pain or pleasure; only now and again, to be conscious that they exist, to have knowledge of them far off in cloudland or feel their steady eyes shining, like quiet watchful stars, above the turmoil of the earth.

I write so ill; so cheap and miserable and penny-a-linerish is this *John Knox* that I have just sent, that I am low. Only I keep my heart up by thinking of you. And if all goes to the worst, shall I not be able to lay my head on the great knees of the middle Fate—O these great knees—I know all Baudelaire meant now with his *géante*—to lay my head on her great knees and go to sleep.

Friday.—I have finished *The Story of King Matthias' Hunting Horn*, whereof I spoke to you, and I think it should be good. It excites me like wine, or fire, or death, or love, or something; nothing of my own writing ever excited me so much; it does seem to me so weird and fantastic. 1874 ÆT. 24

Saturday. —I know now that there is a more subtle and dangerous sort of selfishness in habit than there ever can be in disorder. I never ceased to be generous when I was most *déréglé;* now when I am beginning to settle into habits, I see the danger in front of me—one might cease to be generous and grow hard and sordid in time and trouble. However, thank God it is life I want, and nothing posthumous, and for two good emotions I would sacrifice a thousand years of fame. Moreover I know so well that I shall never be much as a writer that I am not very sorely tempted.

My only chance is in my stories; and so you will forgive me if I postpone everything else to copy out *King Matthias;* I have learned by experience that a story should be copied out and finished fairly off at the first heat if ever. I am even thinking of finishing up half-a-dozen perhaps and trying the publishers. What do you say? Give me your advice.

Sunday.— Good-bye. A long story to tell but no time to tell it: well and happy. Adieu.—Ever your faithful friend,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO MRS. SITWELL

The *Portfolio* article here mentioned is *An Autumn Effect* (see *Essays of Travel*). The Italian story so delightfully begun was by and by condemned and destroyed like all the others of this time.

[EDINBURGH, *January*, *1875*], *Monday*.

HAVE come from a concert. Sinico sang, *tant bien que mal*, "Ah perfido spergiuro!"; and then we had the Eroica symphony (No. 3). I can, and need, say no more; I am rapt out of earth by it; Beethoven is certainly the greatest man the world has yet produced. I wonder, is there anything so superb—I can find no word for it more specific than superb—all I know is that all my knowledge is transcended. I finished to-day and sent off (and a mighty mean detail it is, to set down after Beethoven's grand passion) my *Portfolio* article about Buckinghamshire. In its own way I believe it to be a good thing; and I hope you will find something in it to like; it touches, in a dry enough manner, upon most things under heaven, and if you like me, I think you ought to like this intellectual—no, I withdraw the word—this artistic dog of mine. Thaw—thaw—thaw, up here; and farewell skating, and farewell the clear dry air and the wide, bright, white snow-surface, and all that was so pleasant in the past.

Wednesday.—Yesterday I wasn't well and to-night I have been ever so busy. There came a note from the Academy, sent by John H. Ingram, the editor of the edition of Poe's works I have been reviewing, challenging me to find any more faults. I have found nearly sixty;

so I may be happy; but that makes me none the less sleepy; so I must go to bed.

Friday.—I am awfully out of the humour to write; I am very inert although quite happy; I am informed by those who are more expert that I am bilious. *Bien;* let it be so; I am still content; and though I can do no original work, I get forward making notes for my *Knox* at a good trot.

Saturday.—I am so happy. I am no longer here in Edinburgh. I have been all yesterday evening and this forenoon in Italy, four hundred years ago, with one Sannazzaro, sculptor, painter, poet, etc., and one Ippolita, a beautiful Duchess. O I like it badly! I wish you could hear it at once; or rather I wish you could see it immediately in beautiful type on such a page as it ought to be, in my first little volume of stories. What a change this is from collecting dull notes for *John Knox*, as I have been all the early part of the week—the difference between life and death.—I am quite well again and in such happy spirits, as who would not be, having spent so much of his time at that convent on the hills with these sweet people. *Vous verrez,* and if you don't like this story—well, I give it up if you don't like it. Not but what there 's a long way to travel yet; I am no farther than the threshold; I have only set the men, and the game has still to be played, and a lot of dim notions must become definite and shapely, and a deal be clear to me that is anything but clear as yet. The story shall be called, I think, *When the Devil was well*, in allusion to the old proverb.

Good-bye. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO MRS. SITWELL

[EDINBURGH, *January, 1875.*]

I WISH I could write better letters to you. Mine must be very dull. I must try to give you news. Well, I was at the annual dinner of my old Academy schoolfellows last night. We sat down ten, out of seventy-two! The others are scattered all over the places of the earth, some in San Francisco, some in New Zealand, some in India, one in the backwoods—it gave one a wide look over the world to hear them talk so. I read them some verses. It is great fun; I always read verses, and in the vinous enthusiasm of the moment they always propose to have them printed; *Ce qui n'arrive jamais du reste:* in the morning, they are more calm.

Sunday.—It occurs to me that one reason why there is no news in my letters is because there is so little in my life. I always tell you of my concerts; I was at another yesterday afternoon: a recital of Hallé and Norman Neruda. I went in the evening to the pantomime with the Mackintoshes—cousins of mine. Their little boy, aged four, was there for the first time. To see him with his eyes fixed and open like saucers, and never varying his expression save in so far as he might sometimes open his mouth a little wider, was worth the money. He laughed only once—when the giant's dwarf fed his master as though he were a child. Coming home, he was much interested as to who made the fairies, and wanted to know if they were like *berries*. I should like to know how much this question was due to the idea of their coming up from under the stage, and how much to a vague idea of rhyme. When he was told that they were not like berries, he then asked if they had not been flowers before they were fairies. It was a good deal in the vein of Herbert Spencer's primitive man all this.

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I am pretty well but have not got back to work much since Tuesday. I work far too hard at the story; but I wish I had finished it before I stopped as I feel somewhat out of the swing now.—Ever your faithful

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Another of the literary projects which came to naught, no one of the stories mentioned having turned out according to Stevenson's dream and desire at its first conception, or even having been preserved for use afterwards as the foundation of riper work. "Clytie" is of course the famous Roman bust from the Townley collection in the British Museum.

[EDINBURGH, *January, 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thanks for your letter, I too am in such a state of business that I know not when to find the time to write. Look here—Seeley does not seem to me to have put that paper of mine in this month; so I remain unable to pay you; which is a sad pity and must be forgiven me.

What am I doing? Well I wrote my second *John Knox*, which is not a bad piece of work for me; begun and finished ready for press in nine days. Then I have since written a story called *King Matthias's Hunting Horn,* and I am engaged in finishing another called *The Two Falconers of Cairnstane*. I find my stories affect me rather more perhaps than is wholesome. I have only been two

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hours at work to-day, and yet I have been crying and am shaking badly, as you can see in my handwriting, and my back is a bit bad. They give me pleasure though, quite worth all results. However I shall work no more to-day.

I am to get £1000 when I pass Advocate, it seems; which is good.

O I say, will you kindly tell me all about the bust of Clytie.

Then I had the wisdom to stop and look over Japanese picture books until lunch time.

Well, tell me about Clytie, how old is it, who did it, what 's it about, etc. Send it on a sheet that I can forward without indiscretion to another, as I desire the information for a friend whom I wish to please.

Now look here. When I have twelve stories ready—these twelve—

All Scotch.
I. The Devil on Cramond Sands (needs copying about half).
II. The Curate of Anstruther's Bottle (needs copying altogether).
III. The Two Falconers of Cairnstane (wants a few pages).
IV. Strange Adventures of Mr. Nehemiah Solny (wants reorganisation).
V. King Matthias's Hunting Horn (all ready).
VI. Autolycus at Court (in gremio).
VII. The Family of Love (in gremio).
VIII. The Barrel Organ (all ready).
IX. The Last Sinner (wants copying).

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X. Margery Bonthron (wants a few pages).
XI. Martin's Madonna (in gremio).
XII. Life and Death (all ready).

—when I have these twelve ready, should I not do better to try to get a publisher for them, call them *A Book of Stories* and put a dedicatory letter at the fore end of them? I should get less coin than by going into magazines perhaps; but I should also get more notice, should I not? and so, do better for myself in the long run. Now, should I not? Besides a book with boards is a book with boards, even if it bain't a very fat one and has no references to Ammianus, Marcellinus and German critics at the foot of the pages. On all this, I shall want your serious advice. I am sure I shall stand or fall by the stories; and you 'll think so too, when you see those poor excrescences the two John Knox and Women games. However, judge for yourself and be prudent on my behalf, like a good soul.

Yes, I 'll come to Cambridge then or thereabout, if God doesn't put a real tangible spoke in my wheel.

My terms with my parents are admirable; we are a very united family.

Good-bye, *mon cher, je ne puis plus écrire.* I have not quite got over a damned affecting part in my story this morning. O cussed stories, they will never affect any one but me I fear.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[EDINBURGH, *May or June, 1875.*]

I SAY, we have a splendid picture here in Edinburgh. A Ruysdael of which one can never tire: I think it is one of the best landscapes in the world; a grey still day, a grey still river, a rough oak wood on one shore, on the other chalky banks with very complicated footpaths, oak woods, a field where a man stands reaping, church towers relieved against the sky and a beautiful distance, neither blue nor green. It is so still, the light is so cool and temperate, the river woos you to bathe in it. O I like it!

I say, I wonder if our Scottish Academy's exhibition is going to be done at all for Appleton or whether he does not care for it. It might amuse me, although I am not fit for it. Why and O why doesn't Grove publish me?—Ever yours,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I was at this time revising for the *Portfolio* the substance of Cambridge lectures on Hogarth.

[SWANSTON, *June, 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am a devil certainly; but write I cannot. Look here, you had better get hold of G. C. Lichtenberg's *Ausfürliche Erklarung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche:* Göttingen, 1794 to 1816 (it was published in numbers seemingly). Douglas the publisher lent it to me: and tho' I hate the damned tongue too cordially to do more than dip into it, I have seen some shrewd things. If you cannot get it for yourself (it seems scarce), I dare

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say I could negotiate with Douglas for a loan. This adorable spring has made me quite drunken, drunken with green colour and golden sound. We have the best blackbird here that we have had for years; we have two; but the other is but an average performer. Anything so rich and clear as the pipe of our first fiddle, it never entered into the heart of man to fancy. How the years slip away, Colvin; and we walk little cycles, and turn in little abortive spirals, and come out again, hot and weary, to find the same view before us, the same hill barring the road. Only bless God for it, we have still the same eye to see with, and if the scene be not altogether unsightly, we can enjoy it whether or no. I feel quite happy, but curiously inert and passive, something for the winds to blow over, and the sun to glimpse on and go off again, as it might be a tree or a gravestone. All this willing and wishing and striving leads a man nowhere after all. Here I am back again in my old humour of a sunny equanimity; to see the world fleet about me; and the days chase each other like sun patches, and the nights like cloud-shadows, on a windy day; content to see them go and nowise reluctant for the cool evening, with its dew and stars and fading strain of tragic red. And I ask myself why I ever leave this humour? What I have gained? And the winds blow in the trees with a sustained "Pish!" and the birds answer me in a long derisive whistle.

So that for health, happiness, and indifferent literature, apply to—Ever yours, R. L. S.

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TO MRS. SITWELL

[EDINBURGH, *July 15, 1875.*]

PASSED.

Ever your
R.
L.
S.

III

ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR

EDINBURGH—PARIS

(JULY, 1875-JULY, 1879)

III

ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR

EDINBURGH — PARIS

(JULY, 1875–JULY, 1879)

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

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[EDINBURGH, *end of July, 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Herewith you receive the rest of Henley's hospital work. He was much pleased by what you said of him, and asked me to forward these to you for your opinion. One poem, the *Spring Sorrow,* seems to me the most beautiful. I thank God for this *petit bout de consolation*, that by Henley's own account, this one more lovely thing in the world is not altogether without some trace of my influence: let me say that I have been something sympathetic which the mother found and contemplated while she yet carried it in her womb. This, in my profound discouragement, is a great thing for me; if I cannot do good with myself, at least, it seems, I can help others better inspired; I am at least a skilful accoucheur. My discouragement is from many causes: among others the re-reading of my Italian story. Forgive me, Colvin, but I cannot agree with you; it seems green fruit to me, if not really unwholesome; it is profoundly feeble, damn

1875 ÆT. 24 its weakness! Moreover I stick over my *Fontainebleau*, it presents difficulties to me that I surmount slowly.

I am very busy with Béranger for the *Britannica*. Shall be up in town on Friday or Saturday.—Ever yours,

R. L. S., *Advocate*.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The special mood or occasion of unaccustomed bitterness which prompted this rhapsody has passed from memory beyond recall. The date must be after his return from his second excursion to Fontainebleau.

[SWANSTON, *late Summer, 1875*], *Thursday*.

I HAVE been staying in town, and could not write a word. It is a fine strong night, full of wind; the trees are all crying out in the darkness; funny to think of the birds asleep outside, on the tossing branches, the little bright eyes closed, the brave wings folded, the little hearts that beat so hard and thick (so much harder and thicker than ever human heart) all stilled and quieted in deep slumber, in the midst of this noise and turmoil. Why, it will be as much as I can do to sleep in here in my walled room; so loud and jolly the wind sounds through the open window. The unknown places of the night invite the travelling fancy; I like to think of the sleeping towns and sleeping farm-houses and cottages, all the world over, here by the white road poplar-lined, there by the clamorous surf. Isn't that a good dormitive?

Saturday.—I cannot tell how I feel, who can ever? I feel like a person in a novel of George Sand's; I feel I desire to go out of the house, and begin life anew in the cool blue night; never to come back here; never, never. Only to go out for ever by sunny day and grey day, by bright night and foul, by high-way and by-way, town and hamlet, until somewhere by a road-side or in some clean inn clean death opened his arms to me and took me to his quiet heart for ever. If soon, good; if late, well then, late — there would be many a long bright mile behind me, many a goodly, many a serious sight; I should die ripe and perfect, and take my garnered experience with me into the cool, sweet earth. For I have died already and survived a death; I have seen the grass grow rankly on my grave; I have heard the train of mourners come weeping and go laughing away again. And when I was alone there in the kirk-yard, and the birds began to grow familiar with the grave-stone, I have begun to laugh also, and laughed and laughed until night-flowers came out above me. I have survived myself, and somehow live on, a curious changeling, a merry ghost; and do not mind living on, finding it not unpleasant; only had rather, a thousandfold, died and been done with the whole damned show for ever. It is a strange feeling at first to survive yourself, but one gets used to that as to most things. *Et puis,* is it not one's own fault? Why did not one lie still in the grave? Why rise again among men's troubles and toils, where the wicked wag their shock beards and hound the weary out to labour? When I was safe in prison, and stone walls and iron bars were an hermitage about me, who told me to burst the mild constraint and go forth where the sun dazzles, and the wind pierces, and the loud world sounds and jangles all through the weary day? I mind an old print of a hermit coming out of a great wood towards evening and shading his bleared eyes to see all

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1875 ÆT. 24 the kingdoms of the earth before his feet, where towered cities and castled hills, and stately rivers, and good corn lands made one great chorus of temptation for his weak spirit, and I think I am the hermit, and would to God I had dwelt ever in the wood of penitence[1]——

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The two following letters refer to the essay on the *Spirit of Spring* which I was careless enough to lose in the process of a change of rooms at Cambridge. *The Petits Poèmes en Prose* were attempts, not altogether successful, in the form though not in the spirit of Baudelaire.

SWANSTON [*Autumn, 1875*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thanks. Only why don't you tell me if I can get my *Spring* printed? I want to print it; because it 's nice, and genuine to boot, and has got less side on than my other game. Besides I want coin badly.

I am writing *Petits Poèmes en Prose*. Their principal resemblance to Baudelaire's is that they are rather longer and not quite so good. They are ve-ry cle-ver (words of two syllables), O so aw-ful-ly cle-ver (words of three), O so dam-na-bly cle-ver (words of a devil of a number of syllables). I have written fifteen in a fortnight. I have also written some beautiful poetry. I would like a cake and a cricket-bat; and a passkey to Heaven if you please, and as much money as my friend the Baron Rothschild can spare. I used to look across to Rothschild of a morning when we were brushing our hair, and say — (this is quite true, only we were on the opposite side of the street, and though I used to look over I cannot say I ever detected the beggar, he feared to meet my eagle eye) — well, I used to say to him, "Rothschild, old man, lend us five hundred francs," and it is characteristic of Rothy's dry humour that he used never to reply when it was a question of money. He was a very humorous dog indeed, was Rothy. Heigh-ho! those happy old days. Funny, funny fellow, the dear old Baron. 1875 ÆT. 25

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[1] The letter breaks off here.

How 's that for genuine American wit and humour? Take notice of this in your answer; say, for instance, "Even although the letter had been unsigned, I could have had no difficulty in guessing who was my dear, *lively, witty* correspondent. Yours, Letitia Languish."

O!—my mind has given way. I have gone into a mild, babbling, sunny idiocy. I shall buy a Jew's harp and sit by the roadside with a woman's bonnet on my manly head begging my honest livelihood. Meantime, adieu.

I would send you some of these *PP. Poèmes* of mine, only I know you would never acknowledge receipt or return them.— Yours, and Rothschild's,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO MRS. SITWELL

The review of Robert Browning's *Inn Album* here mentioned appears in *Vanity Fair*, Dec. 11, 1875. The matter of the poem is praised; the "slating" is only for the form and metres.

[EDINBURGH, *December, 1875*.]

WELL, I am hardy! Here I am in the midst of this great snowstorm, sleeping with my window open and *smoking* in my cold tub in the morning so as it would do your heart good to see. Moreover I am in pretty good form other-

1878 ÆT. 27 wise. *Fontainebleau* lags; it has turned out more difficult than I expected in some places, but there is a deal of it ready, and (I think) straight.

I was at a concert on Saturday and heard Hallé and Norman Neruda play that Sonata of Beethoven's you remember, and I felt very funny. But I went and took a long spanking walk in the dark and got quite an appetite for dinner. I did; that 's not bragging.

As you say, a concert wants to be gone to *with* some one, and I know who. I have done rather an amusing paragraph or two for *Vanity Fair* on the *Inn Album.* I have slated R. B. pretty handsomely. I am in a desperate hurry; so good-bye. —Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

CAFÉ DE LA SOURCE, BD. ST. MICHEL,
PARIS, *15th Feb., 1878.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—A thought has come into my head which I think would interest you. Christianity is, among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life. Nothing is so difficult to specify as the position it occupies with regard to asceticism. It is not ascetic. Christ was of all doctors (if you will let me use the word) one of the least ascetic. And yet there is a theory of living in the Gospels which is curiously indefinable, and leans towards asceticism on one side, although it leans away from it on the other. In fact, asceticism is used therein as a means, not as an end. The wisdom of this world consists in making oneself very little in order to avoid many knocks; in preferring others, in order that, even when we lose, we shall find some pleasure in the event; in putting our desires outside of ourselves, in another ship, so to speak, so that, when the worst happens, there will be something left. You see, I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. People must be themselves, I suppose. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interest, to any different sphere. . . . I have had some sharp lessons and some very acute sufferings in these last seven-and-twenty years — more even than you would guess. I begin to grow an old man; a little sharp, I fear, and a little close and unfriendly; but still I have a good heart, and believe in myself and my fellow-men and the God who made us all. . . . There are not many sadder people in this world, perhaps, than I. I have my eye on a sickbed;[1] I have written letters to-day that it hurt me to write, and I fear will hurt others to receive; I am lonely and sick and out of heart. Well, I still hope; I still believe; I still see the good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much, perhaps, but it is always something.

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I find I have wandered a thousand miles from what I meant. It was this: of all passages bearing on Christianity in that form of a worldly wisdom, the most Christian, and so to speak. the key of the whole position, is the Christian doctrine of revenge. And it appears that this came into the world through Paul! There is a fact for you. It was to speak of this that I began this letter; but I have got into deep seas and must go on.

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[1] R. Glasgow Brown lay dying in the Riviera.

1879 ÆT. 28 There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. 'T is a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him.

This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy café; but I had it on my heart to write it; and, indeed, I was out of the humour for anything lighter.

Ever your affectionate son,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don't expect too much of me. Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I have profited by it; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself *cornered*, I have a tendency to say the reverse. R. L. S.

TO MISS JANE WHYTE BALFOUR

This correspondent, the long-lived spinster among the Balfour sisters (died 1907, aged 91) and well-beloved "auntie" of a numerous clan of nephews and nieces, is the subject of the set of verses, *Auntie's Skirts,* in the *Child's Garden.* She had been reading *Travels with a Donkey* on its publication.

[SWANSTON, *June, 1879.*]

MY DEAR AUNTIE,—If you could only think a little less of me and others, and a great deal more of your delight-

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ful self, you would be as nearly perfect as there is any need to be. I think I have travelled with donkeys all my life; and the experience of this book could be nothing new to me. But if ever I knew a real donkey, I believe it is yourself. You are so eager to think well of everybody else (except when you are angry on account of some third person) that I do not believe you have ever left yourself time to think properly of yourself. You never understand when other people are unworthy, nor when you yourself are worthy in the highest degree. Oblige us all by having a guid conceit o' yoursel and despising in the future the whole crowd, including your affectionate nephew,

R. L. S.

IV

THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

MONTEREY AND SAN FRANCISCO

(JULY, 1879–JULY, 1880)

IV

THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

MONTEREY AND SAN FRANCISCO

(JULY, 1879–JULY, 1880)

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

1879
ÆT. 29

MONTEREY [*December, 1879*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have been down with pleurisy but now convalesce; it was a slight attack, but I had a hot fever; pulse 150; and the thing reminds me of my weakness. These miseries tell on me cruelly. But things are not so hopeless as they might be, so I am far from despair. Besides I think I may say I have some courage for life.

But now look here:

Fables and Tales	
Story of a Lie	100 pp. like the Donkey.
Providence and the Guitar .	52
Will o' the Mill	45
A Lodging for the Night . .	40 (about).
Sieur de Malétroit's Door . .	42
	say 280 pp. in all.

Here is my scheme. Henley already proposed that Caldecott should illustrate *Will o' the Mill*. The *Guitar* is

1879 ÆT. 29 still more suited to him; he should make delicious things for that. And though the *Lie* is not much in the way for pictures, I should like to see my dear Admiral in the flesh. I love the Admiral; I give my head, that man's alive. As for the other two, they need not be illustrated at all unless he likes.

Is this a dream altogether? I would if necessary ask nothing down for the stories, and only a small royalty but to begin *from the first copy sold.*

I hate myself for being always on business. But I cannot help my fears and anxieties about money; even if all came well, it would be many a long day before we could afford to leave this coast. Is it true that the *Donkey* is in a second edition? That should bring some money, too, ere long, though not much I dare say. You will see the *Guitar* is made for Caldecott; moreover it's a little thing I like. I am no lover of either of the things in Temple Bar; but they will make up the volume, and perhaps others may like them better than I do. They say republished stories do not sell. Well, that is why I am in a hurry to get this out. The public must be educated to buy mine or I shall never make a cent. I have heaps of short stories in view. The next volume will probably be called *Stories*, or *A Story-Book*, and contain quite a different lot: *The Pavilion on the Links: Professor Rensselaer: The Dead Man's Letter: The Wild Man of the Woods: The Devil on Cramond Sands*. They would all be carpentry stories; pretty grim for the most part; but of course that's all in the air as yet.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

MONTEREY, *December 11th, 1879.*

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Many, many thanks for your long letter. And now to rectifications:—

1. You are wrong about the *Lie*, from choosing a wrong standard. Compare it with my former stories, not with Scott, or Fielding, or Balzac, or Charles Reade, or even Wilkie Collins; and where will you find anything half or a tenth part as good as the Admiral, or even Dick, or even the Squire, or even Esther? If you had thought of that, you would have complimented me for advance. But you were not quite sincere with yourself; you were seeking arguments to make me devote myself to plays, unbeknown, of course, to yourself.

2. Plays, dear boy, are madness for me just now. The best play is hopeless before six months, and more likely eighteen for outsiders like you and me. And understand me, I have to get money *soon*, or it has no further interest for me; I am nearly through my capital; with what pluck I can muster against great anxieties and in a very shattered state of health, I am trying to do things that will bring in money soon; and I could not, if I were not mad, step out of my way to work at what might perhaps bring me in more, but months ahead. Journalism, you know well, is not my forte; yet if I could only get a roving commission from a paper, I should leap at it and send them goodish (no more than that) goodish stuff.

As for my poor literature, dear Henley, you must expect for a time to find it worse and worse. Perhaps, if God favours me a little at last, it will pick up again. Now I am fighting with both hands, a hard battle, and my work, while it will be as good as I can make it, will probably be worth twopence. If you despised the *Donkey*, dear boy, you should have told me so at the time, not reserved it for a sudden revelation just now when I am down in health, wealth, and fortune. But I am glad you have said so at last. Never, please, delay such confidences any more. If they come quickly, they are a help; if they come after long silence, they feel almost like a taunt.

Now, to read all this, any one would think you had written unkindly, which is not so, as God who made us knows. But I wished to put myself right ere I went on to state myself. Nothing has come but the volume of Labiche; the *Burns* I have now given up; the P. O. authorities plainly regard it as contraband; make no further efforts in that direction. But, please, if anything else of mine appears, *see that my people have a copy*. I hoped and supposed my own copy would go as usual to the old address, and, let me use Scotch, I was fair affrontit when I found this had not been done.

You have not told me how you are and I heard you had not been well. Please remedy this.

The end of life? Yes, Henley, I can tell you what that is. How old are all truths, and yet how far from commonplace; old, strange, and inexplicable, like the Sphinx. So I learn day by day the value and high doctrinality of suffering. Let me suffer always; not more than I am able to bear, for that makes a man mad, as hunger drives the wolf to sally from the forest; but still to suffer some, and never to sink up to my eyes in comfort and grow dead in virtues and respectability. I am a bad man by nature, I suppose; but I cannot be good without suffering a little. And the end of life, you will ask? The pleasurable death of self: a thing not to be attained, because it is a thing belonging to Heaven. All this apropos of that good, weak, feverish, fine spirit, —— ——. We have traits in common; we have almost the same strength and weakness intermingled; and if I had not come through a very hot crucible, I should be just as feverish. My sufferings have been healthier than his; mine have been always a choice, where a man could be manly: his have been so too, if he knew it, but were not so upon the face; hence a morbid strain, which his wounded vanity has helped to embitter.

I wonder why I scratch every one to-day. And I believe it is because I am conscious of so much truth in your strictures on my damned stuff. I don't care; there is something in me worth saying, though I can't find what it is just yet; and ere I die, if I do not die too fast, I shall write something worth the boards, which with scarce an exception I have not yet done. At the same time, dear boy, in a matter of vastly more importance than Opera Omnia Ludovici Stevenson, I mean my life, I have not been a perfect cad; God help me to be less and less so as the days go on.

The *Emigrant* is not good, and will never do for P.M.G., though it must have a kind of rude interest.

R. L. S.

I am now quite an American—yellow envelopes.

TO W. E. HENLEY

608 BUSH STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO, *January, 1880.*

MY DEAR HENLEY,—You have got a letter ahead of me, owing to the Alpine accumulation of ill news I had to stagger under. I will stand no complaints of my correspondence from England, I having written near half as many letters again as I have received.

Do not damp me about my work; *qu'elle soit bonne ou mauvaise,* it has to be done. You know the wolf is at the door, and I have been seriously ill. I am now at *Thoreau.* I almost blame myself for persevering in anything so difficult under the circumstances: but it may set me up again in style, which is the great point. I have now £80 in the world and two houses to keep up for an indefinite period. It is odd to be on so strict a regimen; it is a week for instance since I have bought myself a drink, and unless times change, I do not suppose I shall ever buy myself another. The health improves. The Pied Piper is an idea; it shall have my thoughts, and so shall you. The character of the P. P. would be highly comic, I seem to see. Had you looked at the *Pavilion,* I do not think you would have sent it to Stephen; 'tis a mere story, and has no higher pretension: Dibbs is its name, I wish it was its nature also. The *Vendetta,* at which you ignorantly puff out your lips, is a real novel, though not a good one. As soon as I have found strength to finish the *Emigrant,* I shall also finish the *Vend.* and draw a breath—I wish I could say, "and draw a cheque." My spirits have risen *contra fortunam;* I will fight this out, and conquer. You are all anxious to have me home in a hurry. There are two or three objections to that; but I shall instruct you more at large when I have time, for to-day I am hunted, having a pile of letters before me. Yet it is already drawing into dusk.—Yours affectionately, R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

The Dook de Karneel (= *Cornhill*) and Marky de Stephen is of course Mr. Leslie Stephen. The "blood and thunder" is *The Pavilion on the Links*. *Hester Noble* and *Don Juan* were the titles of two plays planned and begun with W. E. Henley the previous winter. They were never finished. The French novels mentioned are by Joseph Méry. The *Dialogue on Character and Destiny* still exists in a fragmentary condition. George the Pieman is a character in *Deacon Brodie*.

608 BUSH STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO, *January 23rd, 1880*.

MY DEAR HENLEY,—That was good news. The Dook de Karneel, K.C.B., taken a blood and thunder! Well, I *thought* it had points; now, I know it. And I 'm to see a proof once more! O Glory Hallelujah, how beautiful is proof, And how distressed that author man who dwells too far aloof. His favourite words he always finds his friends misunderstand, With oaths, he reads his articles, moist brow and clenchèd hand. Impromtoo. The last line first-rate. When may I hope to see the *Deacon?* I pine for the *Deacon*, for proofs of the *Pavilion*—O and for a categorical confession from you that the second edition of the *Donkey* was a false alarm, which I conclude from hearing no more.

I have twice written to the Marky de Stephen; each time with one of my bright papers, so I should hear from him soon. How are Baron Payn, Sir Robert de Bob, and other members of the Aristocracy?

Here 's breid an' wine an' kebbuck an' canty cracks at e'en
  To the folks that mind o' me when I 'm awa',
But them that hae forgot me, O ne'er to be forgi'en—
  They may a' gae tapsalteerie in a raw!

1880 ÆT. 29 I have mighty little to say, dear boy, to seem worth 2½*d.* I have thought of the Piper, but he does not seem to come as yet; I get him too metaphysical. I shall make a shot for *Hester*, as soon as I have finished the *Emigrant* and the *Vendetta* and perhaps my *Dialogue on Character and Destiny*. *Hester* and *Don Juan* are the two that smile on me; but I will touch nothing in the shape of a play until I have made my year's income sure. You understand, and you see that I am right?

I have read *M. Auguste* and the *Crime inconnu,* being now abonné to a library, and found them very readable, highly ingenious, and so French that I could not keep my gravity. The *Damned Ones of the Indies* now occupy my attention; I have myself already damned them repeatedly. I am, as you know, the original person the wheels of whose chariot tarried; but though I am so slow, I am rootedly tenacious. Do not despair. *Hester* and the *Don* are sworn in my soul; and they shall be.

Is there no *news?* Real news, newsy news. Heavenly blue, this is strange. Remember me to the lady of the Cawstle, my toolip, and ever was,

GEORGE THE PIEMAN.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

608 BUSH STREET, SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA, *Jan. 23, 1880.*

MY DEAR AND KIND WEG,—It was a lesson in philosophy that would have moved a bear, to receive your letter in my present temper. For I am now well and well at my ease, both by comparison. First, my health has turned a corner; it was not consumption this time, though consumption it has to be some time, as all my kind friends sing to me, day in, day out. Consumption! how I hate that word; yet it can sound innocent, as, *e.g.*, consumption of military stores. What was wrong with me, apart from colds and little pleuritic flea-bites, was a lingering malaria; and that is now greatly overcome. I eat once more, which is a great amusement and, they say, good for the health. Second, many of the thunderclouds that were overhanging me when last I wrote, have silently stolen away like Longfellow's Arabs: and I am now engaged to be married to the woman whom I have loved for three years and a half. I do not yet know when the marriage can come off; for there are many reasons for delay. But as few people before marriage have known each other so long or made more trials of each other's tenderness and constancy, I permit myself to hope some quiet at the end of all. At least I will boast myself so far; I do not think many wives are better loved than mine will be. Third and last, in the order of what has changed my feelings, my people have cast me off, and so that thundercloud, as you may almost say, has overblown. You know more than most people whether or not I loved my father.[1]

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[1] In reference to the father's estrangement at this time, Sir James Dewar, an old friend of the elder Stevenson, tells a story which would have touched R. L. S. infinitely had he heard it. Sir James (then Professor) Dewar and Mr. Thomas Stevenson were engaged together on some official scientific work near Duns in Berwickshire. "Spending the evening together," writes Sir James, "at an hotel in Berwick-on-Tweed, the two, after a long day's work, fell into close fireside talk over their toddy, and Mr. Stevenson opened his heart upon what was to him a very sore grievance. He spoke with anger and dismay of his son's journey and intentions, his desertion of the old firm, and taking to the

1880 ÆT. 29 These things are sad; nor can any man forgive himself for bringing them about; yet they are easier to meet in fact than by anticipation. I almost trembled whether I was doing right, until I was fairly summoned; then, when I found that I was not shaken one jot, that I could grieve, that I could sharply blame myself, for the past, and yet never hesitate one second as to my conduct in the future, I believe my cause was just and I leave it with the Lord. I certainly look for no reward, nor any abiding city either here or hereafter, but I please myself with hoping that my father will not always think so badly of my conduct nor so very slightingly of my affection as he does at present.

You may now understand that the quiet economical citizen of San Francisco who now addresses you, a bonhomme given to cheap living, early to bed though scarce early to rise in proportion (que diable! let us have style, anyway) busied with its little bits of books and essays and with a fair hope for the future, is no longer the same desponding, invalid son of a doubt and an apprehension who last wrote to you from Monterey. I am none the

devious and barren paths of literature. The Professor took up the cudgels in the son's defence, and at last, by way of ending the argument, half jocularly offered to wager that in ten years from that moment R. L. S. would be earning a bigger income than the old firm had ever commanded. To his surprise, the father became furious, and repulsed all attempts at reconciliation. But six and a half years later, Mr. Stevenson, broken in health, came to London to seek medical advice, and although so feeble that he had to be lifted out and into his cab, called at the Royal Institute to see the Professor. He said: 'I am here to consult a doctor, but I couldna be in London without coming to shake your hand and confess that you were richt after a' about Louis, and I was wrang.' The frail old frame shook with emotion, and he muttered, 'I ken this is my last visit to the south.' A few weeks later he was dead."

less warmly obliged to you and Mrs. Gosse for your good words. I suppose that I am the devil (hearing it so often), but I am not ungrateful. Only please, Weg, do not talk of genius about me; I do not think I want for a certain talent, but I am heartily persuaded I have none of the other commodity; so let that stick to the wall: you only shame me by such friendly exaggerations.

When shall I be married? When shall I be able to return to England? When shall I join the good and blessed in a forced march upon the New Jerusalem? That is what I know not in any degree; some of them, let us hope, will come early, some after a judicious interval. I have three little strangers knocking at the door of Leslie Stephen: *The Pavilion on the Links*, a blood and thunder story, *accepted; Yoshida Torajiro*, a paper on a Japanese hero who will warm your blood, *postulant;* and *Henry David Thoreau: his character and opinions*—postulant also. I give you these hints knowing you to love the best literature, that you may keep an eye at the masthead for these little tit-bits. Write again, and soon, and at greater length to your friend.—Your friend,

(signed) R. L. S.

TO PROFESSOR MEIKLEJOHN

One day at the Savile Club, Stevenson, hearing a certain laugh, cried out that he must know the laugher, who turned out to be a fellow-countryman, the late John Meiklejohn, the well-known educational authority and professor at St. Andrews University. Stevenson introduced himself, and the two became firm friends. Allusion was made a few pages back to a letter from Professor Meiklejohn about the *Burns* essay.

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608 BUSH STREET, SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA, *Feb. 1st, 1880.*

MY DEAR MEIKLEJOHN,—You must think me a thankless fellow by this time; but if you knew how harassed and how sick I had been, and how I have twice begun to write to you already, you might condescend to forgive the puir gangrel body. To tell you what I have been doing, thinking, and coming through these six or seven months would exhilarate nobody: least of all me. *Infandum jubes*, so I hope you won't. I have done a great deal of work, but perhaps my health of mind and body should not let me expect much from what I have done. At least I have turned the corner; my feet are on the rock again, I believe, and I shall continue to pour forth pure and wholesome literature for the masses as per invoice.

I am glad you liked *Burns;* I think it is the best thing I ever did. Did not the national vanity exclaim? Do you know what Shairp thought? I think I let him down gently, did I not?

I have done a *Thoreau*, which I hope you may like, though I have a feeling that perhaps it might be better. Please look out for a little paper called *Yoshida Torajiro*, which, I hope, will appear in *Cornhill* ere very long; the subject, at least, will interest you. I am to appear in the same magazine with a real "blood and bones in the name of God" story. Why Stephen took it, is to me a mystery; anyhow, it was fun to write, and if you can interest a person for an hour and a half, you have not been idle. When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium; and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind. And frankly, Meiklejohn, it is not Shakespeare we take to, when we are in a hot corner;

nor, certainly, George Eliot—no, nor even Balzac. It is Charles Reade or old Dumas, or the *Arabian Nights*, or the best of Walter Scott; it is stories we want, not the high poetic function which represents the world; we are then like the Asiatic with his improvisatore or the middle-agee with his trouvère. We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall peruse your important work; but what we want now is a drug. So I, when I am ready to go beside myself, stick my head into a story-book, as the ostrich with her bush; let fate and fortune meantime belabour my posteriors at their will.

I have not seen the *Spectator* article; nobody sent it to me. If you had an old copy lying by you, you would be very good to despatch it to me. A little abuse from my grandmamma would do me good in health, if not in morals.

This is merely to shake hands with you and give you the top of the morning in 1880. But I look to be answered; and then I shall promise to answer in return. For I am now, so far as that can be in this world, my own man again, and when I have heard from you, I shall be able to write more naturally and at length.

At least, my dear Meiklejohn, I hope you will believe in the sincerely warm and friendly regard in which I hold you, and the pleasure with which I look forward, not only to hearing from you shortly, but to seeing you again in the flesh with another good luncheon and good talk. Tell me when you don't like my work.—Your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I had written proposing that a collected volume of his short stories should be published with illustrations by Caldecott. At the end of this letter occurs his first allusion to his now famous *Requiem*.

[608 BUSH STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO, *February, 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I received a very nice letter from you with two enclosures. I am still unable to finish the *Emigrant*, although there are only some fifteen pages to do. The *Vendetta* is, I am afraid, scarce *Fortnightly* form, though after the *Pavilion* being taken by Stephen, I am truly at sea about all such matters. I dare say my *Prince of Grünewald*—the name still uncertain—would be good enough for anything if I could but get it done: I believe that to be a really good story. The *Vendetta* is somewhat cheap in motive; very rum and unlike the present kind of novels both for good and evil in writing; and on the whole, only remarkable for the heroine's character, and that I believe to be in it.

I am not well at all. But hope to be better. You know I have been hawked to death these last months. And then I lived too low, I fear; and any way I have got pretty low and out at elbows in health. I wish I could say better,—but I cannot. With a constitution like mine, you never know—to-morrow I may be carrying topgallant sails again, but just at present I am scraping along with a jurymast and a kind of amateur rudder. Truly I have some misery, as things go; but these things are mere detail. However I do not want to *crever*, *claquer*, and cave in just when I have a chance of some happiness; nor do I mean to. All the same, I am more and more in a difficulty how to move every day. What a day or an hour might bring forth, God forbid that I should prophesy. Certainly, do what you like about the stories; *Will o' the Mill* or not. It will be Caldecott's book or nobody's. I am glad you like the *Guitar:* I always did: and I think C. could make lovely pikters to it: it almost seems as if I must have written it for him express.

I have already been a visitor at the Club for a fortnight; but that 's over, and I don't much care to renew the period. I want to be married, not to belong to all the Clubs in Christendie. . . . I half think of writing up the Sand-lot agitation for Morley; it is a curious business; were I stronger, I should try to sugar in with some of the leaders: a chield amang 'em takin' notes; one, who kept a brothel, I reckon, before she started socialist, particularly interests me. If I am right as to her early industry, you know she would be sure to adore me. I have been all my days a dead hand at a harridan, I never saw the one yet that could resist me. When I die of consumption, you can put that upon my tomb.

Sketch of my tomb follows:—

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
born 1850, of a family of engineers,
died . . . . . .
"Nitor aquis."
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

You, who pass this grave, put aside hatred; love kindness; be all services remembered in your heart and all offences pardoned; and as you go down again among the living, let

1880 ÆT. 29 this be your question: can I make some one happier this day before I lie down to sleep? Thus the dead man speaks to you from the dust: you will hear no more from him.

Who knows, Colvin, but I may thus be of more use when I am buried than ever when I was alive? The more I think of it, the more earnestly do I desire this. I may perhaps try to write it better some day; but that is what I want in sense. The verses are from a beayootiful poem by me. R. L. S.

TO J. W. FERRIER

In the interval between this letter and the last, the writer had been down with an acute and dangerous illness. *Forester*, here mentioned, was an autobiographical paper by J. W. F. on his own boyhood.

P.O. SAN FRANCISCO, *April 8th, 1880.*

MY DEAR FERRIER,—Many thanks for your letter, and the instalment of *Forester* which accompanied it, and which I read with amusement and pleasure. I fear Somerset's letter must wait; for my dear boy, I have been very nearly on a longer voyage than usual; I am fresh from giving Charon a quid instead of an obolus: but he, having accepted the payment, scorned me, and I had to make the best of my way backward through the mallow-wood, with nothing to show for this displacement but the fatigue of the journey. As soon as I feel fit, you shall have the letter, trust me. But just now even a note such as I am now writing takes it out of me. I have, truly, been very sick; I fear I am a vain man, for I thought it a pity I should die. I could not help thinking that a good many would be disappointed; but for myself, although I still think life a business full of agreeable features, I was not entirely unwilling to give it up. It is so difficult to behave well; and in that matter, I get more dissatisfied with myself, because more exigent, every day. I shall be pleased to hear again from you soon. I shall be married early in May and then go to the mountains, a very withered bridegroom. I think your MS. Bible, if that were a specimen, would be a credit to humanity. Between whiles, collect such thoughts both from yourself and others: I somehow believe every man should leave a Bible behind him,—if he is unable to leave a jest book. I feel fit to leave nothing but my benediction. It is a strange thing how, do what you will, nothing seems accomplished. I feel as far from having paid humanity my board and lodging as I did six years ago when I was sick at Mentone. But I dare say the devil would keep telling me so, if I had moved mountains, and at least I have been very happy on many different occasions, and that is always something. I can read nothing, write nothing; but a little while ago and I could eat nothing either; but now that is changed. This is a long letter for me; rub your hands, boy, for 't is an honour.—Yours, from Charon's strand, R. L. S.

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V

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

(JULY, 1880–OCTOBER, 1882)

V

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

(JULY, 1880–OCTOBER, 1882)

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

1880
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I forget what were the two sets of verses (apparently satirical) here mentioned. The volume of essays must be *Virginibus Puerisque,* published the following spring; but it is dedicated in prose to W. E. Henley.

BEN WYVIS HOTEL,
STRATHPEFFER [*July, 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—One or two words. We are here: all goes exceeding well with the wife and with the parents. Near here is a valley; birch woods, heather, and a stream; I have lain down and died; no country, no place, was ever for a moment so delightful to my soul. And I have been a Scotchman all my life, and denied my native land! Away with your gardens of roses, indeed! Give me the cool breath of Rogie waterfall, henceforth and for ever, world without end.

I enclose two poems of, I think, a high order. One is my dedication for my essays; it was occasioned by that delicious article in the *Spectator*. The other requires no explanation; c'est tout bonnement un petit chef d'œuvre de grâce, de délicatesse, et de bon sens humanitaire. Celui qui ne s'en sent pas touché jusqu'aux larmes—

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celui-là n'a pas vécu. I wish both poems back, as I am copyless: but they might return *via* Henley.

My father desires me still to withdraw the *Emigrant.* Whatever may be the pecuniary loss, he is willing to bear it; and the gain to my reputation will be considerable.

I am writing against time and the post runner. But you know what kind messages we both send to you. May you have as good a time as possible so far from Rogie!

R. L. S.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

A further stay at Strathpeffer led to disenchantment, not with outdoor nature, but with human nature as there represented, and he relieves his feelings as follows:

BEN WYVIS HOTEL,
STRATHPEFFER, *July, 1880.*

MY DEAR CHERLS,—I am well but have a little overtired myself which is disgusting. This is a heathenish place near delightful places, but inhabited, alas! by a wholly bestial crowd.

ON SOME GHOSTLY COMPANIONS AT A SPA

I had an evil day when I
To Strathpeffer drew anigh,
For there I found no human soul,
But Ogres occupied the whole.
They had at first a human air
In coats and flannel underwear.
They rose and walked upon their feet
And filled their bellies full of meat,
Then wiped their lips when they had done—

But they were ogres every one.
Each issuing from his secret bower
I marked them in the morning hour.
By limp and totter, lisp and droop
I singled each one from the group.
Detected ogres, from my sight
Depart to your congenial night
From these fair vales: from this fair day
Fleet, spectres, on your downward way,
Like changing figures in a dream
To Muttonhole and Pittenweem!
Or, as by harmony divine
The devils quartered in the swine,
If any baser place exist
In God's great registration list—
Some den with wallow and a trough—
Find it, ye ogres, and be off!

Yours, R. L. S.

TO ISOBEL STRONG

Written in answer to an inquiry from his stepdaughter at San Francisco, on the second day after his arrival at Davos.

HOTEL BELVEDERE, DAVOS, *November, 1880.*

NO my che-ild—not Kamschatka this trip, only the top of the Alps, or thereby; up in a little valley in a wilderness of snowy mountains; the Rhine not far from us, quite a little highland river; eternal snow-peaks on every hand. Yes; just this once I should like to go to the Vienna gardens[1] with the family and hear Tweedle-dee and drink

---

[1] In San Francisco.

1880 ÆT. 30 something and see Germans—though God knows we have seen Germans enough this while back. Naturally some in the Customs House on the Alsatian frontier, who would have made one die from laughing in a theatre, and provoked a smile from us even in that dismal juncture. To see them, big blond, sham-Englishmen but with an unqualifiable air of not quite fighting the sham through, diving into old women's bags and going into paroxysms of arithmetic in white chalk, three or four of them (in full uniform) in full cry upon a single sum, with their brows bent and a kind of arithmetical agony upon their mugs. Madam, the diversion of cock-fighting has been much commended, but it was not a circumstance to that Custom House. They only opened one of our things: a basket. But when they met from within the intelligent gaze of *Woggs,* they all lay down and died. Woggs is a fine dog. . . .

God bless you! May coins fall into your coffee and the finest wines and wittles lie smilingly about your path, with a kind of dissolving view of fine scenery by way of background; and may all speak well of you—and me too for that matter—and generally all things be ordered unto you totally regardless of expense and with a view to nothing in the world but enjoyment, edification, and a portly and honoured age.—Your dear papa,

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[HOTEL BELVEDERE, DAVOS, *December, 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I feel better, but variable. I see from the doctor's report that I have more actual disease than I supposed; but there seems little doubt of my recovery. I like the place and shall like it much better when you come at Christmas. That is written on my heart: S. C. comes at Christmas: so if you play me false, I shall have a lie upon my conscience. I like Symonds very well, though he is much, I think, of an invalid in mind and character. But his mind is interesting, with many beautiful corners, and his consumptive smile very winning to see. We have had some good talks; one went over Zola, Balzac, Flaubert, Whitman, Christ, Handel, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne; do you see the *liaison?*—in another, I, the Bohnist, the un-Grecian, was the means of his conversion in the matter of the Ajax. It is truly not for nothing that I have read my Buckley.[1]

To-day, the south wind blows; and I am seedy in consequence.

Later.—I want to know when you are coming, so as to get you a room. You will toboggan and skate your head off, and I will talk it off, and briefly if you don't come pretty soon, I will cut you off with a shilling.

It would be handsome of you to write. The doctor says I may be as well as ever; but in the meantime I go slow and am fit for little.—Ever yours, R. L. S.

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[1] The translator of Sophocles in Bohn's Classics.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

KINNAIRD COTTAGE, PITLOCHRY [*June, 1881*].

MY DEAR S. C.,—Great and glorious news. Your friend, the bold unfearing chap, Aims at a professorial cap, And now besieges, do and dare, The Edinburgh History chair. Three months in summer only it Will bind him to that windy bit; The other nine to range abroad, Untrammel'd in the eye of God. Mark in particular one thing: He means to work that cursed thing, And to the golden youth explain Scotland and England, France and Spain.

In short, sir, I mean to try for this chair. I do believe I can make something out of it. It will be a pulpit in a sense; for I am nothing if not moral, as you know. My works are unfortunately so light and trifling they may interfere. But if you think, as I think, I am fit to fight it, send me the best kind of testimonial stating all you can in favour of me and, with your best art, turning the difficulty of my never having done anything in history, strictly speaking. Second, is there anybody else, think you, from whom I could wring one—I mean, you could wring one for me? Any party in London or Cambridge who thinks well enough of my little books to back me up with a few heartfelt words? Jenkin approves highly; but says, pile in *English* testimonials. Now I only know Stephen, Symonds, Lang, Gosse and you, and Meredith, to be sure. The chair is in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates, where I believe I am more wondered at than loved. I do not know the foundation; one or two hundred, I suppose. But it would be a good thing for me, out and out good.

Help me to live, help me to *work,* for I am the better of pressure, and help me to say what I want about God, man and life.
R. L. S.

Heart-broken trying to write rightly to people.
History and Constitutional Law is the full style.

TO CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

The next two letters are addressed to an old friend and fellow-member of the Speculative Society, who had passed Advocate six years before, on the same day as R. L. S. himself, and is now Lord Guthrie, a Senator of the Scottish Courts of Justice, and has Swanston Cottage, sacred to the memory of R. L. S., for his summer home.

KINNAIRD COTTAGE,
PITLOCHRY, *June 30, 1881.*

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—I propose to myself to stand for Mackay's chair. I can promise that I will not spare to work. If you can see your way to help me, I shall be glad; and you may at least not mind making my candidature known.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

KINNAIRD COTTAGE,
PITLOCHRY, *July 2nd, 1881.*

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—Many thanks for your support, and many more for the kindness and thoughtfulness of your letter. I shall take your advice in both directions; presuming that by "electors" you mean the curators. I

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must see to this soon; and I feel it would also do no harm to look in at the P. H.[1] As soon then as I get through with a piece of work that both sits upon me like a stone and attracts me like a piece of travel, I shall come to town and go a-visiting. Testimonial-hunting is a queer form of sport—but has its pleasures.

If I got that chair, the Spec.[2] would have a warm defender near at hand! The sight of your fist made me Speculative on the past.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson's uncle, Dr. George Balfour, had recommended him to wear a specially contrived and hideous respirator for the inhalation of pine-oil.

BRAEMAR, *1881*.

DEAR HENLEY, with a pig's snout on
I am starting for London,
Where I likely shall arrive,
On Saturday, if still alive:
Perhaps your pirate doctor might
See me on Sunday? If all 's right,
I should then lunch with you and with she
Who 's dearer to you than you are to me.
I shall remain but little time
In London, as a wretched clime,
But not so wretched (for none are)
As that of beastly old Braemar.
My doctor sends me skipping. I
Have many facts to meet your eye.

---

[1] Parliament House.

[2] Speculative Society.

My pig's snout 's now upon my face;
And I inhale with fishy grace,
My gills outflapping right and left,
Ol. pin. sylvest. I am bereft
Of a great deal of charm by this—
Not quite the bull's eye for a kiss—
But like the gnome of olden time
Or bogey in a pantomime.
For ladies' love I once was fit,
But now am rather out of it.
Where'er I go, revolted curs
Snap round my military spurs;
The children all retire in fits
And scream their bellowses to bits.
Little I care: the worst 's been done:
Now let the cold impoverished sun
Drop frozen from his orbit; let
Fury and fire, cold, wind and wet,
And cataclysmal mad reverses
Rage through the federate universes;
Let Lawson triumph, cakes and ale,
Whiskey and hock and claret fail;—
Tobacco, love, and letters perish,
With all that any man could cherish:
You it may touch, not me. I dwell
Too deep already—deep in hell;
And nothing can befall, O damn!
To make me uglier than I am.

R. L. S.

This-yer refers to an ori-nasal respirator for the inhalation of pine-wood oil, *oleum pini sylvestris.*

TO EDMUND GOSSE

Some of the habitual readers of *Young Folks* had written objecting to the early instalments of *Treasure Island,* and the editor had come forward in their defence.

DAVOS PRINTING OFFICE,
MANAGED BY SAMUEL LLOYD OSBOURNE & CO.,
THE CHALET [*November 9, 1881*].

DEAR WEG,—If you are taking *Young Folks*, for God's Sake Twig the editorial style; it is incredible; we are all left panting in the rear; twig, O twig it. His name is Clinton; I should say the most melodious prosewriter now alive; it 's like buttermilk and blacking; it sings and hums away in that last sheet, like a great old kettle full of bilge water. You know: none of us could do it, boy. See No. 571, last page: an article called "Sir Claude the Conqueror," and read it *aloud* in your best rhythmic tones; mon cher, c'est épatant.

Observe in the same number, how Will J. Shannon girds at your poor friend; and how the rhythmic Clinton steps chivalrously forth in his defence. First the Rev. Purcell; then Will J. Shannon: thick fall the barbèd arrows.[1]

I wish I could play a game of chess with you.

If I survive, I shall have Clinton to dinner: it is plain I must make hay while the sun shines; I shall not long keep a footing in the world of penny writers, or call them obolists. It is a world full of surprises, a romantic world. Weg, I was known there; even I. The obolists, then, sometimes peruse our works. It is only fair; since I so much batten upon theirs. Talking of which, in Heaven's name, get *The Bondage of Brandon* (3 vols.) by Bracebridge Hemming. It 's the devil and all for drollery. There is a Superior (sic) of the Jesuits, straight out of Skelt.

---

[1] The Editor's defence was in the following terms:—"That which you condemn is really the best story now appearing in the paper, and the impress of an able writer is stamped on every paragraph of *The Treasure Island.* You will probably share this opinion when you have read a little more of it."

And now look here, I had three points: Clinton—disposed of—(2nd) Benj. Franklin—do you want him? (3rd) A radiant notion begot this morning over an atlas: why not, you who know the lingo, give us a good legendary and historical book on Iceland? It would, or should, be as romantic as a book of Scott's; as strange and stirring as a dream. Think on 't. My wife screamed with joy at the idea; and the little Lloyd clapped his hands; so I offer you three readers on the spot.

Fanny and I have both been in bed, tended by the hired sick nurse; Lloyd has a broken finger (so he did not clap his hands literally); Wogg has had an abscess in his ear; our servant is a devil.—I am yours ever, with both of our best regards to Mrs. Gosse,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
The Rejected Obolist.

TO W. E. HENLEY

This letter speaks of contributions to the *Magazine of Art* (in these years edited by Mr. Henley) from J. A. Symonds and from R. L. S. himself, "Bunyan" meaning the essay on the cuts in Bagster's edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. A toy press had just been set up in the chalet for the lad Lloyd.

DAVOS PRINTING OFFICE,
MANAGED BY SAMUEL LLOYD OSBOURNE & CO.,
THE CHALET [*November, 1881*].

DEAR HENLEY,—I have done better for you than you deserved to hope; the Venice Medley is withdrawn; and I have a Monte Oliveto (short) for you, with photographs and sketches. I think you owe luck a candle; for this no skill could have accomplished without the aid of accident.

How about carving and gilding? I have nearly killed myself over Bunyan; and am too tired to finish him to-day, as I might otherwise have done. For his back is broken. For some reason, it proved one of the hardest things I ever tried to write; perhaps—but no—I have no theory to offer—it went against the spirit. But as I say I girt my loins up and nearly died of it.

In five weeks, six at the latest, I should have a complete proof of *Treasure Island*. It will be from 75 to 80,000 words; and with anything like half-good pictures, it should sell. I suppose I may at least hope for eight pic's? I aspire after ten or twelve. You had better.

—Two days later.

Bunyan skips to-day, pretty bad, always with an official letter. Yours came last night. I had already spotted your Dickens; very pleasant and true.

My wife is far from well; quite confined to bed now; drain poisoning. I keep getting better slowly; appetite dicky; but some days I feel and eat well. The weather has been hot and heartless and un-Davosy.

I shall give Symonds his note in about an hour from now.

Have done so; he will write Vesalius and of Botticelli's Dante for you.

Morris's Sigurd is a grrrrreat poem; that is so. I have cried aloud at this re-reading; he had fine stuff to go on, but he has touched it, in places, with the hand of a master. Yes. Regin and Fafnir are incredibly fine. 1881 ÆT. 31

Love to all.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

Mr. Gosse and R. L. S. had proposed to Mr. R. W. Gilder, of the *Century Magazine*, that they should collaborate for him on a series of murder papers, beginning with the Elstree murder; and he had accepted the proposal on terms which they thought liberal.

HOTEL BUOL, DAVOS, *Dec. 26th, 1881.*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have just brought my wife back, through such cold, in an open sleigh too, as I had never fancied to exist. I won't use the word torture, but go to your dentist's and in nine cases out of ten you will not suffer more pain than we suffered.

This is merely in acknowledgment of your editorial: to say that I shall give my mind at once to the Murder. But I bethink me you can say so much and convey my sense of the liberality of our Cousins, without exhibiting this scrawl. So I may go on to tell you that I have at last found a publisher as eager to publish, as I am to write a Hazlitt. Bentley is the Boy; and very liberal, at least, as per last advices; certainly very friendly and eager, which makes work light, like whistling. I wish I was with the rest of—well, of us—in the red books. But I am glad to get a whack at Hazlitt, howsoe'er.

How goes your Gray? I would not change with you, brother! Gray would never be suited to my temperament, while Hazlitt fits me like a glove.

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I hope in your studies in *Young Folks* you did not miss the delicious reticences, the artistic concealments, and general fine-shade graduation, through which the fact of the Xmas Nr. being 3d. was instilled—too strong—inspired into the mind of the readers. It was superb.

I may add as a postscript: I wish to God I or anybody knew what was the matter with my wife.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. GOSSE

Mrs. Gosse had sent R. L. S. a miniature Bible illustrated with rude cuts, picked up at an outdoor stall. "Lloyd's new work" is *Black Canyon.*

[CHALET AM STEIN, DAVOS, *March 16, 1882.*]

DEAR MRS. GOSSE,—Thank you heartily for the Bible, which is exquisite. I thoroughly appreciate the whole; but have you done justice to the third lion in Daniel (like the third murderer in Macbeth)—a singular animal—study him well. The soldier in the fiery furnace beats me.

I enclose a programme of Lloyd's new work. The work I shall send to-morrow, for the publisher is out and I dare not touch his "plant": *il m'en cuirait.* The work in question I think a huge lark, but still droller is the author's attitude. Not one incident holds with another from beginning to end; and whenever I discover a new inconsistency, Sam is the first to laugh—with a kind of humorous pride at the thing being so silly.

I saw the note, and I was so sorry my article had not come in time for the old lady. We should all hurry up and praise the living. I must praise Tupper. À propos, did you ever read him?—or know any one who had?

That is very droll; but the truth is we all live in a clique, buy each other's books and like each other's books; and the great, gaunt, grey, gaping public snaps its big fingers and reads Talmage and Tupper—and *Black Canyon*.

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My wife is better; I, for the moment, am but so-so myself; but the printer is in very—how shall we say?—large type at this present, and the sound of the press never ceases. Remember me to Weg.—Yours very truly,

(signed) ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

NOTICE

To-day is published by S. L. Osbourne & Co.

ILLUSTRATED
BLACK CANYON,
or
WILD ADVENTURES IN THE FAR WEST.
An
Instructive and amusing TALE written by
Samuel Lloyd Osbourne
Price 6*d*.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

Although *Black Canyon* is rather shorter than ordinary for that kind of story, it is an excellent work. We cordially recommend it to our readers.—*Weekly Messenger*.

S. L. Osbourne's new work (*Black Canyon*) is splendidly illustrated. In the story, the characters are bold and striking. It reflects the highest honour on its writer.
—*Morning Call*.

A very remarkable work. Every page produces an effect. The end is as singular as the beginning. I never saw such a work before.—*R. L. Stevenson*.

TO TREVOR HADDON

The few remaining letters of this period are dated from Edinburgh and from Stobo Manse, near Peebles. This, in the matter of weather and health, was the most disappointing of all Stevenson's attempts at summer residence in Scotland. Before going to Stobo he made a short excursion with his father to Lochearnhead; and later spent some three weeks with me at Kingussie, but from neither place wrote any letters worth preserving. The following was addressed to a young art-student who had read the works of Walt Whitman after reading Stevenson's essay on him, and being staggered by some things he found there, had written asking for further comment and counsel.

17 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH [*June, 1882*].

DEAR SIR,—If I have in any way disquieted you, I believe you are justified in bidding me stand and deliver a remedy if there be one: which is the point.

1st I am of your way of thinking: that a good deal of Whitman is as well taken once but 2nd I quite believe that it is better to have everything brought before one in books. In that way the problems reach us when we are cool, and not warped by the sophistries of an instant passion. Life itself presents its problems with a terrible directness and at the very hour when we are least able to judge calmly. Hence this Pisgah sight of all things, off the top of a book, is only a rational preparation for the ugly grips that must follow.

But 3rd, no man can settle another's life for him. It is the test of the nature and courage of each that he shall decide it for himself. Each in turn must meet and beard the Sphynx. Some things however I may say—and you will treat them as things read in a book for you to accept or refuse as you shall see most fit.

Go not out of your way to make difficulties. Hang

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back from life while you are young. Shoulder no responsibilities. You do not yet know how far you can trust yourself—it will not be very far, or you are more fortunate than I am. If you can keep your sexual desires in order, be glad, be very glad. Some day, when you meet your fate, you will be free, and the better man. *Don't make a boy and girl friendship that which it is not.* Look at Burns: that is where amourettes conduct an average good man; and a tepid marriage is only a more selfish amourette—in the long run. Whatever you do, see that you don't sacrifice a woman; that's where all imperfect loves conduct us. At the same time, if you can make it convenient to be chaste, for God's sake, avoid the primness of your virtue; hardness to a poor harlot is a sin lower than the ugliest unchastity.

Never be in a hurry anyhow.

There is my sermon.

Certainly, you cannot too earnestly go in for the Greek; and about any art, think last of what pays, first of what pleases. It is in that spirit only that an art can be made. Progress in art is made by learning to *enjoy* it. That which seems a little dull at first, is found to contain the elements of pleasure more largely though more quietly commingled.

I return to my sermon for one more word: Natural desire gives you no right to any particular woman: that comes with love only, and don't be too ready to believe in love: there are many shams: the true love will not allow you to reason about it.

It is your fault if I appear so pulpiteering.

Wishing you well in life and art, and that you may long be young.—Believe me, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO TREVOR HADDON

17 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH [*June, 1882*].

MY DEAR SIR,—I see nothing "cheekie" in anything you have done. Your letters have naturally given me much pleasure, for it seems to me you are a pretty good young fellow, as young fellows go; and if I add that you remind me of myself, you need not accuse me of retrospective vanity.

You now know an address which will always find me; you might let me have your address in London; I do not promise anything—for I am always overworked in London—but I shall, if I can arrange it, try to see you.

I am afraid I am not so rigid on chastity: you are probably right in your view; but this seems to me a dilemma with two horns, the real curse of a man's life in our state of society—and a woman's too, although, for many reasons, it appears somewhat differently with the enslaved sex. By your "fate" I believe I meant your marriage, or that love at least which may befall any one of us at the shortest notice and overthrow the most settled habits and opinions. I call that your fate, because then, if not before, you can no longer hang back, but must stride out into life and act.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

VI

MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

(OCTOBER, 1882–AUGUST, 1884)

VI

MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

(OCTOBER, 1882–AUGUST, 1884)

TO TREVOR HADDON

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CAMPAGNE DEFLI,
ST. MARCEL, *Dec. 29th, 1882.*

DEAR SIR,—I am glad you sent me your note, I had indeed lost your address, and was half thinking to try the Ringstown one; but far from being busy, I have been steadily ill. I was but three or four days in London, waiting till one of my friends was able to accompany me, and had neither time nor health to see anybody but some publisher people. Since then I have been worse and better, better and worse, but never able to do any work and for a large part of the time forbidden to write and even to play Patience, that last of civilised amusements. In brief, I have been "the sheer hulk" to a degree almost outside of my experience, and I desire all my friends to forgive me my sins of omission this while back. I only wish you were the only one to whom I owe a letter, or many letters.

But you see, at least, you had done nothing to offend me; and I dare say you will let me have a note from time to time, until we shall have another chance to meet.—Yours sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

An excellent new year to you, and many of them.

If you chance to see a paragraph in the papers describ-

1883 ÆT. 32 ing my illness, and the "delicacies suitable to my invalid condition" cooked in copper, and the other ridiculous and revolting yarns, pray regard it as a spectral illusion, and pass by.

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON
TO JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

I intercalate here Mrs. Stevenson's extremely vivid and characteristic account of the weird misadventures that befell the pair during their retreat from St. Marcel in search of a healthier home.

[CAMPAGNE DEFLI,
ST. MARCEL, *January, 1883.*]

MY DEAR MR. SYMONDS,—What must you think of us? I hardly dare write to you. What do you do when people to whom you have been the dearest of friends requite you by acting like fiends? I do hope you heap coals of fire on their heads in the good old Christian sense.

Louis has been very ill again. I hasten to say that he is now better. But I thought at one time he would never be better again. He had continual hemorrhages and became so weak that he was twice insensible on one day, and was for a long time like one dead. At the worst fever broke out in this village, typhus, I think, and all the death-bells rang, and we could hear the chanting whilst the wretched villagers carried about their dead lying bare to the sun on their coffin-lids, so spreading the contagion through the streets. The evening of the day when Louis was so long insensible the weather changed, becoming very clear and fine and greatly refreshing and reviving him. Then I said if it held good he should start in the morning for Nice and try what a change might do. Just at that time there was not money enough for the two of us, so he had to start alone, though I expected soon to be able to follow him. During the night a peasant-man died in a house in our garden, and in the morning the corpse, hideously swollen in the stomach, was lying on its coffin-lid at our gates. Fortunately it was taken away just before Louis went, and he didn't see it nor hear anything about it until afterwards. I had been back and forth all the morning from the door to the gates, and from the gates to the door, in an agony lest Louis should have to pass it on his way out.

I was to have a despatch from Toulon where Louis was to pass the night, two hours from St. Marcel, and another from Nice, some few hours further, the next day. I waited one, two, three, four days, and no word came. Neither telegram nor letter. The evening of the fourth day I went to Marseilles and telegraphed to the Toulon and Nice stations and to the bureau of police. I had been pouring out letters to every place I could think of. The people at Marseilles were very kind and advised me to take no further steps to find my husband. He was certainly dead, they said. It was plain that he stopped at some little station on the road, speechless and dying, and it was now too late to do anything; I had much better return at once to my friends. "Eet ofen 'appens so," said the Secretary, and "Oh yes, all right, very well," added a Swiss in a sympathetic voice. I waited all night at Marseilles and got no answer, all the next day and got no answer; then I went back to St. Marcel and there was nothing there. At eight I started on the train with Lloyd who had come for his holidays, but it only took us to Toulon where again I telegraphed. At last I got an answer the next day at noon.

I waited at Toulon for the train I had reason to believe Louis travelled by, intending to stop at every station and inquire for him until I got to Nice. Imagine what those days were to me. I never received any of the letters Louis had written to me, and he was reading the first he had received from me when I knocked at his door. A week afterwards I had an answer from the police. Louis was much better: the change and the doctor, who seems very clever, have done wonderful things for him. It was during this first day of waiting that I received your letter. There was a vague comfort in it like a hand offered in the darkness, but I did not read it until long after.

We have had many other wild misadventures, Louis has twice (started) actually from Nice under a misapprehension. At this moment I believe him to be at Marseilles, stopping at the Hotel du Petit Louvre; I am supposed to be packing here at St. Marcel, afterwards we are to go somewhere, perhaps to the Lake of Geneva. My nerves are so shattered by the terrible suspense I endured that memorable week that I have not been fit to do much. When I was returning from Nice a dreadful old man with a fat wife and a weak granddaughter sat opposite me and plied me with the most extraordinary questions. He began by asking if Lloyd was any connection of mine, and ended I believe by asking my mother's maiden name. Another of the questions he put to me was where Louis wished to be buried, and whether I could afford to have him embalmed when he died. When the train stopped the only other passenger, a quiet man in a corner who looked several times as if he wished to interfere and stop the old man but was too shy, came to me and said that he knew Sidney Colvin and he knew you, and that you were both friends of Louis; and that his name was Basil Hammond,[1] and he wished to stay on a day in Marseilles and help me work off my affairs. I accepted his offer with heartfelt thanks. I was extremely ill next day, but we two went about and arranged about giving up this house and what compensation, and did some things that I could not have managed alone. My French is useful only in domestic economy, and even that, I fear, is very curious and much of it patois. Wasn't that a good fellow, and a kind fellow?—I cannot tell you how grateful I am, words are such feeble things—at least for that purpose. For anger, justifiable wrath, they are all too forcible. It was very bad of me not to write to you, we talked of you so often and thought of you so much, and I always said—"now I will write"—and then somehow I could not. . . .

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Stevenson here narrates in his own fashion by what generalship he at last got rid of the Campagne Defli without having to pay compensation as his wife expected.

HOTEL DU PETIT LOUVRE,
MARSEILLE, *15 Feb. 1883.*

DEAR SIR,—This is to intimate to you that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson were yesterday safely delivered

of a
Campagne.

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[1] For many years fellow of and historical lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge.

1883 ÆT. 32 The parents are both doing much better than could be expected; particularly the dear papa.

There, Colvin, I did it this time. Huge success. The propriétaires were scattered like chaff. If it had not been the agent, may Israel now say, if it had not been the agent who was on our side! But I made the agent march! I threatened law; I was Immense—what do I say?—Immeasurable. The agent, however, behaved well and is a fairly honest little one-eared, white-eyed tom-cat of an opera-going gold-hunter. The propriétaire *non est inventa;* we countermarched her, got in valuators; and in place of a hundred francs in her pocket, she got nothing, and I paid *one* silver biscuit! It *might* go further but I am convinced will not, and anyway, I fear not the consequences.

The weather is incredible; my heart sings; my health satisfies even my wife. I did jolly well right to come after all and she now admits it. For she broke down as I knew she would, and I from here, without passing a night at the Defli, though with a cruel effusion of coach-hires, took up the wondrous tale and steered the ship through. I now sit crowned with laurel and literally exulting in kudos. The affair has been better managed than our last two winterings.—I am yours,

BRABAZON DRUM.

TO W. E. HENLEY

[CHALET LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *April, 1883.*]

MY head is singing with *Otto;* for the first two weeks I wrote and revised and only finished IV chapters: last week, I have just drafted straight ahead, and I have just finished Chapter XI. It will want a heap of oversight and much will not stand, but the pace is good; about 28 *Cornhill* pp. drafted in seven days, and almost all of it dialogue —indeed I may say all, for I have dismissed the rest very summarily in the draft: one can always tickle at that. At the same rate, the draft should be finished in ten days more; and then I shall have the pleasure of beginning again at the beginning. Ah damned job! I have no idea whether or not *Otto* will be good. It is all pitched pretty high and stilted; almost like the *Arabs,* at that; but of course there is love-making in *Otto,* and indeed a good deal of it. I sometimes feel very weary; but the thing travels—and I like it when I am at it. 1883 ÆT. 32

Remember me kindly to all.—Your ex-contributor,

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[CHALET LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *May, 1883.*]

COLVIN,—The attempt to correspond with you is vain. Well, well, then so be it. I will from time to time write you an insulting letter, brief but monstrous harsh. I regard you in the light of a genteel impostor. Your name figures in the papers but never to a piece of letter-paper: well, well.

News. I am well: Fanny been ill but better: *Otto* about three-quarters done: *Silverado* proofs a terrible job—it is a most unequal work—new wine in old bottles—large rats, small bottles:[1] as usual, penniless—O but penniless: still, with four articles in hand (say £35) and the £100 for *Silverado* imminent, not hopeless.

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[1] The allusion is to a specimen I had been used to hear quoted of the Duke of Wellington's table-talk in his latter years. He had said that musk-rats were sometimes kept alive in bottles in India. Curate, or other meek dependent: "I presume, your Grace, they are small rats and large bottles." His Grace: "No, large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles."

Why am I so penniless, ever, ever penniless, ever, ever penny-penny-penniless and dry?

The birds upon the thorn,
The poppies in the corn,
They surely are more fortunate or prudenter than I!

In Arabia, everybody is called the Father of something or other for convenience or insult's sake. Thus you are "the Father of Prints," or of "Bummkopferies," or "Father of Unanswered Correspondence." They would instantly dub Henley "the Father of Wooden Legs"; me they would denominate the "Father of Bones," and Matthew Arnold "the Father of Eyeglasses."

I have accepted most of the excisions. Proposed titles —

The Innocent Muse.
A Child's Garden of Rhymes.
Songs of the Playroom.
Nursery Songs.

I like the first? R. L. S.

TO MR. SIMONEAU

This friend was the keeper of the inn and restaurant where Stevenson had boarded at Monterey in the autumn of 1879. In writing French, as will be seen, Stevenson had always more grip of idiom than of grammar.

[LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *May or June, 1883.*]

MON CHER ET BON SIMONEAU, — J'ai commencé plusieurs fois de vous écrire; et voilà-t-il pas qu'un empêche-

ment quelconque est arrivé toujours. La lettre ne part pas; et je vous laisse toujours dans le droit de soupçonner mon cœur. Mon bon ami, ne pensez pas que je vous ai oublié ou que je vous oublierai jamais. Il n'en est de rien. Votre bon souvenir me tient de bien près, et je le garderai jusqu'à la mort. 1883 ÆT. 32

J'ai failli mourir de bien près; mais me voici bien rétabli, bien que toujours un peu chétif et malingre. J'habite, comme vous voyez, la France. Je travaille beaucoup, et je commence à ne pas être le dernier; déjà on me dispute ce que j'écris, et je n'ai pas à me plaindre de ce que l'on appelle les honoraires. Me voici alors très affairé, très heureux dans mon ménage, gâté par ma femme, habitant la plus petite maisonette dans le plus beau jardin du monde, et voyant de mes fenêtres la mer, les isles d'Hyères, et les belles collines, montagnes et forts de Toulon.

Et vous, mon très cher ami? Comment celà va-t-il? Comment vous portez-vous? Comment va le commerce? Comment aimez vous le pays? et l'enfant? et la femme? Et enfin toutes les questions possibles. Ecrivez-moi donc bien vite, cher Simoneau. Et quant à moi, je vous promets que vous entendrez bien vîte parler de moi; je vous *récrirai* sous peu, et je vous enverrai un de mes livres. Ceci n'est qu'un serrement de main, *from the bottom of my heart, dear and kind old man.* — Your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO TREVOR HADDON

During the height of the Provençal summer, for July and part of August, Stevenson went with his wife to the Baths of Royat in Auvergne (travelling necessarily by way of Clermont-Ferrand). His parents joined them at Royat for part of their visit. This and possibly the next following letters were written during the trip. The news here referred to was that his correspondent had won a scholarship at the Slade School.

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES. BUT JUST NOW WRITING
FROM CLERMONT-FERRAND, *July 5, 1883.*

DEAR MR. HADDON,—Your note with its piece of excellent news duly reached me. I am delighted to hear of your success: selfishly so; for it is pleasant to see that one whom I suppose I may call an admirer is no fool. I wish you more and more prosperity, and to be devoted to your art. An art is the very gist of life; it grows with you; you will never weary of an art at which you fervently and superstitiously labour. Superstitiously: I mean, think more of it than it deserves; be blind to its faults, as with a wife or father; forget the world in a technical trifle. The world is very serious; art is the cure of that, and must be taken very lightly; but to take art lightly, you must first be stupidly owlishly in earnest over it. When I made Casimir say "Tiens" at the end, I made a blunder. I thought it was what Casimir would have said and I put it down. As your question shows, it should have been left out. It was a "patch" of realism, and an anti-climax. Beware of realism; it is the devil; 't is one of the means of art, and now they make it the end! And such is the farce of the age in which a man lives, that we all, even those of us who most detest it, sin by realism. 1883 ÆT. 32

Notes for the student of any art.

1. Keep an intelligent eye upon *all* the others. It is only by doing so that you come to see what Art is: Art is the end common to them all, it is none of the points by which they differ.

2. In this age beware of realism.

3. In your own art, bow your head over technique. Think of technique when you rise and when you go to bed. Forget purposes in the meanwhile; get to love technical processes; to glory in technical successes; get to see the world entirely through technical spectacles, to see it entirely in terms of what you can do. Then when you have anything to say, the language will be apt and copious.

My health is better.

I have no photograph just now; but when I get one you shall have a copy. It will not be like me; sometimes I turn out a capital, fresh bank clerk; once I came out the image of Runjeet Singh; again the treacherous sun has fixed me in the character of a travelling evangelist. It 's quite a lottery; but whatever the next venture proves to be, soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, you shall have a proof. Reciprocate. The truth is I have no appearance; a certain air of disreputability is the one constant character that my face presents: the rest change like water. But still I am lean, and still disreputable.

Cling to your youth. It is an artistic stock in trade. Don't give in that you are ageing, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still; only a little duller, greedier and better tempered; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium. The last is a great thing for life but—query?—a bad endowment for art?

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ÆT. 32

Another note for the art student.

4. See the good in other people's work; it will never be yours. See the bad in your own, and don't cry about it; it will be there always. Try to use your faults; at any rate use your knowledge of them, and don't run your head against stone walls. Art is not like theology; nothing is forced. You have not to represent the world. You have to represent only what you can represent with pleasure and effect, and the only way to find out what that is is by technical exercise.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. SIMONEAU

[HYÈRES OR ROYAT, *Summer, 1883*.]

MY DEAR FRIEND SIMONEAU,—It would be difficult to tell how glad I was to get your letter with your good news and kind remembrances, it did my heart good to the bottom. I shall never forget the good time we had together, the many long talks, the games of chess, the flute on an occasion, and the excellent food. Now I am in clover, only my health a mere ruined temple; the ivy grows along its shattered front, otherwise, I have no wish that is not fulfilled: a beautiful large garden, a fine view of plain, sea and mountain; a wife that suits me down to the ground, and a barrel of good Beaujolais. To this I must add that my books grow steadily more popular, and if I could only avoid illness I should be well to do for money, as it is, I keep pretty near the wind. Have I other means? I doubt it. I saw François here; and it was in some respects sad to see him, pining in the ungenial life and not, I think, very well pleased with his relatives. The young men, it is true, adored him, but his niece tried to pump me about what money I had, with an effrontery I was glad to disappoint. How he spoke of you I need not tell you. He is your true friend, dear Simoneau, and your ears should have tingled when we met, for we talked of little but yourself.

The papers you speak about are past dates but I will send you a paper from time to time, as soon as I am able to go out again. We were both well pleased to hear of your marriage, and both Mrs. Stevenson and myself beg to be remembered with the kindest wishes to Mrs. Simoneau. I am glad you have done this. All races are better away from their own country; but I think you French improve the most of all. At home, I like you well enough, but give me the Frenchman abroad! Had you stayed at home, you would probably have acted otherwise. Consult your consciousness, and you will think as I do. How about a law condemning the people of every country to be educated in another, to change sons in short? Should we not gain all around? Would not the Englishman unlearn hypocrisy? Would not the Frenchman learn to put some heart into his friendships? I name what strikes me as the two most obvious defects of the two nations. The French might also learn to be a little less rapacious to women and the English to be a little more honest.

Indeed their merits and defects make a balance.

The English.	The French.
hypocrites	free from hypocrisy
good, stout reliable friends	incapable of friendship
dishonest to the root	fairly honest
fairly decent to women.	rather indecent to women.

There is my table, not at all the usual one, but yes, I think you will agree with it. And by travel, each race can cure much of its defects and acquire much of the others' virtues. Let us say that you and I are complete!! You are anyway: I would not change a hair of you. The Americans hold the English faults: dishonest and hypocrites, perhaps not so strongly but still to the exclusion of others. It is strange that such mean defects should be so hard to eradicate, after a century of separation, and so great an admixture of other blood.

Your stay in Mexico must have been interesting indeed: and it is natural you should be so keen against the Church on this side, we have a painful exhibition on the other side: the *libre-penseur* a mere priest without the sacraments, the narrowest tyranny of intolerance popular, and in fact a repetition in the XIXth century of theological ill-feeling minus the sermons. We have speeches instead. I met the other day one of the new lay schoolmasters of France; a pleasant cultivated man, and for some time listened to his ravings. "In short," I said, "you are like Louis Quatorze, you wish to drive out of France all who do not agree with you." I thought he would protest; not he!—"Oui, Monsieur," was his answer. And that is the cause of liberty and free thought! But the race of man was born tyrannical; doubtless Adam beat Eve, and when all the rest are dead the last man will be found beating the last dog. In the land of Padre d. R. you see the old tyranny still active on its crutches; in this land, I begin to see the new, a fat fellow, out of leading-strings and already killing flies.

This letter drones along unprofitably enough. Let me put a period to my divagations. Write again soon, and let me hear good news of you, and I will try to be more quick of answer. 1883 ÆT. 32

And with the best wishes to yourself and all your family, believe me, your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MISS FERRIER

Soon after he was settled again at Hyères, Stevenson had a great shock in the death of one of the oldest and most intimate of his friends of Edinburgh days, Mr. James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* in *Memories and Portraits*). It is in accordance with the expressed wish of this gentleman's surviving sister that publicity is given to the following letters:

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES [*September, 1883*].

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER, — They say Walter is gone. You, who know how I have neglected him, will conceive my remorse. I had another letter written; when I heard he was worse, I promised myself to wake up for the last time. Alas, too late!

My dear Walter, set apart that terrible disease, was, in his right mind, the best and gentlest gentleman. God knows he would never intentionally hurt a soul.

Well, he is done with his troubles and out of his long sickness, and I dare say is glad to be at peace and out of the body, which in him seemed the enemy of the fine and kind spirit. He is the first friend I have ever lost, and I find it difficult to say anything and fear to intrude upon your grief. But I had to try to tell you how much I shared it.

Could you get any one to tell me particulars? Do not write yourself of course—I do not mean that; but some one else.

R. L. S.

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TO MISS FERRIER

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *30th Sept., 1883.*

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter and was interested by all you told me. Yes, I know it is better for him to be gone, and what you say helps me to realise that it is so—I did not know how much he had suffered; it is so that we are cured of life. I am a little afraid to write or think much of Walter just yet; as I have not quite recovered the news and I have my work and my wife to think of.

Some day soon when the sharpness passes off (if it does) I must try to write some more of what he was: he was so little understood. I don't suppose any one knew him better than I did. But just now it is difficult to think of him. For you I do mourn indeed, and admire your courage: the loss is terrible. I have no portrait of him. Is there one? If so please let me have it: if it has to be copied please let it be.

Henley seems to have been as good to dear Walter as he is to all. That introduction was a good turn I did to both. It seems so strange for a friendship to begin all these years ago with so much mirth and now to end with this sorrow. Our little lives are moments in the wake of the eternal silence: but how crowded while they last. His has gone down in peace.

I was not certainly the best companion for Walter, but I do believe I was the best he had. In these early days he was not fortunate in friends—looking back I see most clearly how much we both wanted a man of riper wisdom. We had no religion between the pair of us—that was the flaw. How very different was our last intimacy in Gladstone Terrace. But youth must learn—looking back over these wasted opportunities, I must try rather to remember what I did right, than to bewail the much that I left undone and knew not how to do. I see that even you have allowed yourself to have regrets. Dear Miss Ferrier, sure you were his angel. We all had something to be glad of, in so far as we had understood and loved and perhaps a little helped the gentle spirit; but you may certainly be proud. He always loved you; and I remember in his worst days spoke of you with great affection; a thing unusual with him; for he was walking very wild and blind and had no true idea whether of himself or life. The lifting afterwards was beautiful and touching. Dear Miss Ferrier, I have given your kind messages to my wife who feels for you and reciprocates the hope to meet. When it may come off I know not. I feel almost ashamed to say that I keep better, I feel as if like Mrs. Leslie "you must hate me for it"—still I can very easily throw back whether by fatigue or want of care, and I do not like to build plans for my return to my own land. Is there no chance of your coming hereabouts? Though we cannot in our small and disorderly house offer a lady a room, one can be got close by and we can offer possible board and a most lovely little garden for a lounge. Please remember me kindly to your brother John and Sir A. and Lady Grant and believe me with hearty sympathy — Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I was rejoiced to hear he never doubted of my love, but I must cure my hate of correspondence. This has been a sharp lesson.

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TO W. E. HENLEY

It will be remembered that "Whistles" or "Penny Whistles" was his own name for the verses of the *Child's Garden.* The proposal referred to at the end of this letter was one which had reached him from Messrs. Lippincott, the American publishers, for a sailing trip to be taken among the Greek Islands and made the subject of a book.

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES [*October, 1883*].

MY dear excellent, admired, volcanic angel of a lad, trusty as a dog, eruptive as Vesuvius, in all things great, in all the soul of loyalty: greeting.

That you are better spirits me up good. I have had no colour of a Mag. of Art. From here, here in Highairs the Palm-trees, I have heard your conversation. It came here in the form of a Mistral, and I said to myself, Damme, there is some Henley at the foot of this!

I shall try to do the Whistle as suggested; but I can usually do whistles only by giving my whole mind to it: to produce even such limping verse demanding the whole forces of my untuneful soul. I have other two anyway: better or worse. I am now deep, deep, ocean deep in *Otto:* a letter is a curst distraction, about 100 pp. are near fit for publication; I am either making a spoon or spoiling the horn of a Caledonian bull, with that airy potentate. God help me, I bury a lot of labour in that principality; and if I am not greatly a gainer, I am a great loser and a great fool. However, *sursum corda;* faint heart never writ romance.

Your Dumas I think exquisite; it might even have been stronglier said: the brave old godly pagan, I adore his big footprints on the earth.

Have you read Meredith's *Love in the Valley?* It got me, I wept; I remembered that poetry existed.

"When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror."

I propose if they (Lippincotts) will let me wait till next Autumn, and go when it is safest, to accept £450 with £100 down; but it is now too late to go this year. November and December are the months when it is safest; and the back of the season is broken. I shall gain much knowledge by the trip; this I look upon as one of the main inducements. R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Of the "small ships" here mentioned, *Fontainebleau* and *The Character of Dogs* are well known: *A Misadventure in France* is probably a draft of the *Epilogue to an Inland Voyage,* not published till five years later. *The Travelling Companion* (of which I remember little except that its scene was partly laid in North Italy and that a publisher to whom it was shown declared it a work of genius but indecent) was abandoned some two years later, as set forth on p. 205 of this volume.

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES [*November, 1883*].

£10,000 Pounds Reward!

WHEREAS Sidney Colvin, more generally known as the Guardian Angel, has vanished from the gaze of Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the above reward is offered as a means to discover the whereabouts of the misguided gentleman. He was known as a man of irregular habits, and his rowdy exterior would readily attract attention in a crowd. He was never known to resist a drink; whiskey was his favourite dish. If any one will bring him to Mr. Stevenson's back area door, dead or alive, the greatest rejoicing will be felt by a bereaved and uneasy family.

Also, wherefore not a word, dear Colvin? My news is: splendid health; great success of the *Black Arrow;* another tale demanded, readers this time (the Lord lighten them!) pleased; a great variety of small ships launched or still upon the stocks—(also, why not send the annotated proof of *Fontainebleau?* ce n'est pas d'un bon camarade); a paper on dogs for Carr;[1] a paper called *Old Mortality*, a paper called *A Misadventure in France*, a tale entituled *The Travelling Companion; Otto* arrested one foot in air; and last and not least, a great demand for news of Sidney Colvin and others. Herewith I pause, for why should I cast pearls before swine?

A word, Guardian Angel. You are much loved in this house, not by me only, but by the wife. The Wogg himself is anxious.—Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

This refers to some dispute which had arisen with an editor (I forget whom) concerning the refusal of an article on Salvini. "Fastidious Brisk" was a name coined by Mr. Henley for Stevenson—very inappropriately as I always thought.

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *Autumn, 1883.*

MY DEAR LAD,—You know your own business best; but I wish your honesty were not so warfaring. These conflicts pain Lucretian sitters on the shore; and one wonders—one wonders—wonders and whimpers. I do not say my attitude is noble; but is yours conciliatory? I revere Salvini, but I shall never see him—nor anybody—play again. That is all a matter of history, heroic history, to me. Were I in London, I should be the liker Tantalus—no more. But as for these quarrels: in not many years shall we not all be clay-cold and safe below ground, you with your loud-mouthed integrity, I with my fastidious briskness—and—with all their faults and merits, swallowed in silence. It seems to me, in ignorance of cause, that when the dustman has gone by, these quarrellings will prick the conscience. Am I wrong? I am a great sinner; so, my brave friend, are you; the others also. Let us a little imitate the divine patience and the divine sense of humour, and smilingly tolerate those faults and virtues that have so brief a period and so intertwined a being.

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[1] Mr. J. Comyns Carr, at this time editing the *English Illustrated Magazine.*

I fear I was born a parson; but I live very near upon the margin (though, by your leave, I may outlive you all!), and too much rigour in these daily things sounds to me like clatter on the kitchen dishes. If it might be—could it not be smoothed? This very day my father writes me he has gone to see, upon his deathbed, an old friend to whom for years he has not spoken or written. On his deathbed; no picking up of the lost stitches; merely to say: my little fury, my spotted uprightness, after having split our lives, have not a word of quarrel to say more. And the same post brings me the news of another—War! Things in this troubled medium are not so clear, dear Henley; there are faults upon all hands; and the end comes, and Ferrier's grave gapes for us all.

THE PROSY PREACHER
(But written in deep dejection, my dear man).

Suppose they *are* wrong? Well, am I not tolerated, are you not tolerated?—we and *our* faults?

TO W. E. HENLEY

Early in January, Stevenson, after a week's visit at Hyères from his friends Charles Baxter and W. E. Henley, accompanied them as far as Nice, and there suddenly went down with an attack of acute congestion, first of the lungs and then of the kidneys. At one moment there seemed no hope, but he recovered slowly and returned to Hyères. His friends had not written during his illness, fearing him to be too far gone to care for letters. As he got better he began to chafe at their silence.

[HYÈRES, *February or March, 1884.*]

ONISƎD WƎDNⱯꓕ

I CANNOT read, work, sleep, lie still, walk, or even play patience. These plagues will overtake all damned silencists; among whom, from this day out, number

the fiery indignator
Roland Little Stevenson.

I counted miseries by the heap,
But now have had my fill,
I cannot see, I do not sleep,
But shortly I shall kill.

Eructavit cor Timonis.

Of many letters, here is a
Full End.
The last will and testament of
a demitting correspondent.

My indefatigable pen
I here lay down for ever. Men
Have used, and left me, and forgot;

Men are entirely off the spot;
Men are a *blague* and an abuse;
And I commit them to the deuce!

RODERICK LAMOND STEVENSON.

I had companions, I had friends,
I had of whiskey various blends.
The whiskey was all drunk; and lo!
The friends were gone for evermo!

The loquacious man at peace.

And when I marked the ingratitude,
I to my maker turned, and spewed.

RANDOLPH LOVEL STEVENSON.

A pen broken, a subverted ink-pot.

All men are rot; but there are two—
Sidney, the oblivious Slade, and you—
Who from the rabble stand confest
Ten million times the rottenest.

R. L. S.

When I was sick and safe in gaol
I thought my friends would never fail.
One wrote me nothing; t' other bard
Sent me an insolent post-card.

R. L. S.

Here endeth the
Familiar correspondence of
R. L. S.

Explicuerunt Epistolae
Stevensonianae
Omnes.

Terminus: Silentia.

IF NOBODY WRITES TO ME I SHALL DIE

I now write no more.

RICHARD LEFANU STEVENSON,
Duke of Indignation

Mark Tacebo,
Secretary

Isaac Blood
John Blind
Vain-hope Go-to-bed
Israel Sciatica
witnesses.

FINIS Finaliter finium.

The finger on the mouth.

TO W. E. HENLEY

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *April 20th, 1884.*

I HAVE been really ill for two days, hemorrhage, weakness, extreme nervousness that will not let me lie a moment, and damned sciatica o' nights; but to-day I am on the recovery. Time; for I was miserable. It is not often that I suffer, with all my turns and tumbles, from the sense of serious illness; and I hate it, as I believe everybody does. And then the combination of not being able to read, not being allowed to speak, being too weak to write, and not wishing to eat, leaves a man with some empty seconds. But I bless God, it 's over now; to-day I am much mended.

Insatiable gulf, greedier than hell, and more silent than the woods of Styx, have you or have you not lost the dedication to the *Child's Garden?* Answer that plain question, as otherwise I must try to tackle to it once again.

Sciatica is a word employed much by Shakespeare in a certain connection. 'T is true, he was no physician, but as I read, he had smarted in his day. I, too, do smart. And yet this keen soprano agony, these veins of fire and bombshell explosions in the knee, are as nothing to a certain dull, drowsy pain I had when my kidneys were congested at Nice; there was death in that; the creak of Charon's rowlocks, and the miasmas of the Styx. I may say plainly, much as I have lost the power of bearing pain, I had still rather suffer much than die. Not only the love of life grows on me, but the fear of certain odd end-seconds grows as well. 'T is a suffocating business, take it how you will; and Tyrrel and Forest only bunglers.

Well, this is an essay on death, or worse, on dying: to return to daylight and the winds, I perceive I have grown to live too much in my work and too little in life. 'T is the dollars do it: the world is too much. Whenever I think I would like to live a little, I hear the butcher's cart resounding through the neighbourhood; and so to plunge again. The fault is a good fault for me; to be able to do so, is to succeed in life; and my life has been a huge success. I can live with joy and without disgust in the art by which I try to support myself; I have the best wife in the world; I have rather more praise and nearly as much coin as I deserve; my friends are many and true-hearted. Sir, it is a big thing in successes. And if mine anchorage lies something open to the wind, Sciatica, if the crew are blind, and the captain spits blood, one cannot have all, and I may be patched up again, who knows? "His timbers yet are (indifferently) sound, and he may float again."

Thanks for the word on *Silverado*.—Yours ever,

THE SCIATICATED BARD.

1884
ÆT. 33

TO TREVOR HADDON

The allusions to Skelt, the last of the designers and etchers of cheap sheets illustrating the popular dramas and melodramas of the day, will need no explanation to readers familiar with the essay *A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured.*

LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES, *April 23rd, 1884.*

DEAR MR. HADDON,—I am pleased to see your hand again, and, waiting my wife's return, to guess at some of the contents. For various things have befallen me of late. First, as you see, I had to change my hand; lastly I have fallen into a kind of blindness, and cannot read. This more inclines me for something to do, to answer your letter before I have read it, a safe plan familiar to diplomatists.

I gather from half-shut eyes that you were a Skeltist; now seriously that is a good beginning; there is a deal of romance (cheap) in Skelt. Look at it well, and you will see much of Dickens. And even Skelt is better than conscientious, grey back-gardens, and conscientious, dull still lives. The great lack of art just now is a spice of life and interest; and I prefer galvanism to acquiescence in the grave. All do not; 't is an affair of tastes; and mine are young. Those who like death have their innings to-day with art that is like mahogany and horsehair furniture, solid, true, serious and as dead as Cæsar. I wish I could read *Treasure Island;* I believe I should like it. But work done, for the artist, is the Golden Goose killed; you sell its feathers and lament the eggs. To-morrow the fresh woods!

I have been seriously ill, and do not pick up with that finality that I should like to see. I linger over and digest my convalescence like a favourite wine; and what with blindness, green spectacles, and seclusion, cut but a poor figure in the world.

I made out at the end that you were asking some advice—but what, my failing eyes refuse to inform me. I must keep a sheet for the answer; and Mrs. Stevenson still delays, and still I have no resource against tedium but the waggling of this pen.

You seem to me to be a pretty lucky young man; keep your eyes open to your mercies. That part of piety is eternal; and the man who forgets to be grateful has fallen asleep in life. Please to recognise that you are unworthy of all that befalls you—unworthy, too, I hear you wail, of this terrible sermon; but indeed we are not worthy of our fortunes; love takes us in a counterfeit, success comes to us at play, health stays with us while we abuse her; and even when we gird at our fellow-men, we should remember that it is of their good will alone, that we still live and still have claims to honour. The sins of the most innocent, if they were exactly visited, would ruin them to the doer. And if you know any man who believes himself to be worthy of a wife's love, a friend's affection, a mistress's caress, even if venal, you may rest assured he is worthy of nothing but a kicking. I fear men who have no open faults; what do they conceal? We are not meant to be good in this world, but to try to be, and fail, and keep on trying; and when we get a cake to say, "Thank God!" and when we get a buffet, to say, "Just so: well hit!"

I have been getting some of the buffets of late; but have amply earned them—you need not pity me. Pity sick children and the individual poor man; not the mass. Don't pity anybody else, and never pity fools. The opti-

1884 ÆT. 33 mistic Stevenson; but there is a sense in these wanderings.

Now I have heard your letter, and my sermon was not mal-à-propos. For you seem to be complaining. Everybody's home is depressing, I believe; it is their difficult business to make it less so. There is an unpleasant saying, which would have pricked me sharply at your age.—Yours truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Enclosing some supplementary verses for the *Child's Garden.*

MARSEILLES, *June, 1884.*

DEAR S. C.,—Are these four in time? No odds about order. I am at Marseille and stood the journey wonderfully. Better address Hotel Chabassière, Royat, Puy de Dôme. You see how this d—d poeshie flows from me in sickness: Are they good or bad? Wha kens? But I like the *Little Land,* I think, as well as any. As time goes on I get more fancy in. We have no money, but a valet and a maid. The valet is no end; how long can you live on a valet? Vive le valet! I am tempted to call myself a valetudinarian. I love my love with a V because he is a Valetudinarian; I took him to Valetta or Valais, gave him his Vails and tenderly addressed him with one word,

Vale.

P.S.—It does not matter of course about order. As soon as I have all the slips I shall organise the book for the publisher. A set of 8 will be put together under the title *An Only Child;* another cycle of 10 will be called *In the*

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Garden and other six called *Bedtime* to end all up. It will now make quite a little volume of a good way upwards of 100 pp. Will you instruct Bain to send me a Bible; of a type that I can read without blindness; the better if with notes; there is a Clarendon Press Bible, pray see it yourself. I also want Ewald's History in a translation.

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The play of *Deacon Brodie*, the joint work of R. L. S. and W. E. H., was to be performed in London early in July.

[HOTEL CHABASSIÈRE, ROYAT, *July, 1884.*]

DEAR S. C., — Books received with great thanks. Very nice books, though I see you underrate my cecity: I could no more read their beautiful Bible than I could sail in heaven. However, I have sent for another and can read the rest for patience.

I quite understand your feelings about the *Deacon*, which is a far way behind; but I get miserable when I think of Henley cutting this splash and standing, I fear, to lose a great deal of money. It is about Henley, not Brodie, that I care. I fear my affections are not strong to my past works; they are blotted out by others; and anyhow the *Deacon* is damn bad.

I am half asleep and can no more discourse. Say to your friends, "Look here, some friends of mine are bringing out a play; it has some stuff; suppose you go and see it." But I know I am a cold, unbelieving fellow, incapable of those hot claps that honour you and Henley and therefore—I am asleep. *Child's Garden* (first instalment) come. Fanny ill; self asleep.

R. L. S.

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TO W. E. HENLEY

I suppose, but cannot remember, that I had in the meantime sent him *Captain Singleton.*

[HOTEL CHABASSIÈRE, ROYAT, *July, 1884.*]

DEAR BOY,—I am glad that —— —— has disappointed you. Depend upon it, nobody is so bad as to be worth scalping, except your dearest friends and parents; and scalping them may sometimes be avoided by scalping yourself. I grow daily more lymphatic and benign; bring me a dynamiter, that I may embrace and bless him!—So, if I continue to evade the friendly hemorrhage, I shall be spared in anger to pour forth senile and insignificant volumes, and the clever lads in the journals, not doubting of the eye of Nemesis, shall mock and gird at me.

All this seems excellent news of the *Deacon.* But O! that the last tableau, on from Leslie's entrance, were re-written! We had a great opening there and missed it. I read for the first time *Captain Singleton;* it has points; and then I re-read *Colonel Jack* with ecstasy; the first part is as much superior to *Robinson Crusoe* as *Robinson* is to—*The Inland Voyage.* It is pretty, good, philosophical, dramatic, and as picturesque as a promontory goat in a gale of wind. Get it and fill your belly with honey.

Fanny hopes to be in time for the *Deacon.* I was out yesterday, and none the worse. We leave Monday.

R. L. S.

VII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

(SEPTEMBER, 1884–DECEMBER, 1885)

VII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

(SEPTEMBER, 1884–DECEMBER, 1885)

TO W. E. HENLEY

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BONALLIE TOWERS, BOURNEMOUTH,
November 11, 1884.

DEAR BOY,—I have been nearly smashed altogether; fever and chills, with really very considerable suffering; and to my deep gloom and some fear about the future, work has had to stop. There was no way out of it; yesterday and to-day nothing would come, it was a mere waste of tissue, productive of spoiled paper.

I hope it will not last long; for the bum-baily is panting at my rump, and when I turn a scared eye across my shoulder, I behold his talons quivering above my frock-coat tails.

Gosse has writ to offer me £40 for a Christmas number ghost story for the *Pall Mall:* eight thousand words. I have, with some conditions, accepted; I pray Heaven I may be able to do it. But I am not sure that my incapacity to work is wholly due to illness; I believe the morphine I have been taking for my bray may have a hand in it. It moderates the bray, but I think, sews up the donkey.

I think my wife is a little better. If only I could get in trim, and get this work done, I should be quite chipper.

R. L. S.

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TO W. E. HENLEY

BONALLIE TOWERS, BOURNEMOUTH,
Nov. 13, 1884.

MY DEAR BOY,—A thousand thanks for the *Molière*. I have already read, in this noble presentment, *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and a part of *Les Femmes Savantes*; I say, Poquelin took damned good care of himself: Argan and Arysule, what parts! Many thanks also for John Silver's pistol; I recognise it; that was the one he gave Jim Hawkins at the mouth of the pit; I shall get a plate put upon it to that effect.

My birthday was a great success; I was better in health; I got delightful presents; I received the definite commission from the P.M.G., and began to write the tale; and in the evening Bob arrived, a simple seraph. We have known each other ten years; and here we are, too, like the pair that met in the infirmary: why can we not mellow into kindness and sweetness like Bob? What is the reason? Does nature, even in my octogenarian carcase, run too strong that I must be still a bawler and a brawler and a treader upon corns? You, at least, have achieved the miracle of embellishing your personal appearance to that point that, unless your mother is a woman of even more perspicacity than I suppose, it is morally impossible that she can recognise you. When I saw you ten years ago, you looked rough and—kind of stigmatised, a look of an embittered political shoemaker; where is it now? You now come waltzing around like some light-hearted monarch; essentially jovial, essentially royal; radiant of smiles. And in the meanwhile, by a complementary process, I turn into a kind of hunchback with white hair! The devil.

Well, let us be thankful for our mercies: in these ten years what a change from the cell in the hospital, and the two sick boys in the next bed, to the influence, the recognition, the liberty, and the happiness of to-day! Well, well; fortune is not so blind as people say; you dreed a good long weird; but you have got into a fine green paddock now to kick your heels in. And I, too, what a difference; what a difference in my work, in my situation, and unfortunately, also in my health! But one need not complain of a pebble in the shoe, when by mere justice one should rot in a dungeon.

Many thanks to both of you; long life to our friendship, and that means, I do most firmly believe, to these clay continents on which we fly our colours; good luck to one and all, and may God continue to be merciful.—Your old and warm friend, R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson and his wife were still busy on *More New Arabian Nights* (the romance of the *Great North Road* having been begun and postponed). The question here touched is, to what publishers should they be offered.

BONALLIE TOWERS, BOURNEMOUTH,
December, 1884.

DEAR LAD,—For Cassell, I thought the G.N.R. (not railway this time) was the motto. What are Cassells to do with this eccentric mass of blague and seriousness? Their poor auld pows will a' turn white as snaw, man. They would skriegh with horror. You see, the lot of tales is now coming to a kind of bearing. They are being quite rehandled; all the three intercalary narratives have

1884 ÆT. 34 been condemned and are being replaced—two by picturesque and highly romantic adventures; one by a comic tale of character; and the thing as it goes together so far, is, I do think, singularly varied and vivid, coming near to laughter and touching tears.

Will Cassell stand it? No.

Et de deux.

I vote for the syndicate, and to give Cassell the *North Road* when done. *Et sic subscr.* R. L. S.

My health is better. I never sleep, to be sure; Cawdor hath butchered sleep; and I am twinged a bit by aches and rheumatism; but I get my five to seven hours of work; and if that is not health, it is the nearest I am like to have.

TO MISS FERRIER

This refers to the death of Sir Alexander Grant, the distinguished Aristotelian scholar and Principal of Edinburgh University.

[BONALLIE TOWERS, BOURNEMOUTH,
December, 1884.]

MY DEAR COGGIE,—We are very much distressed to hear of this which has befallen your family. As for Sir Alexander, I can but speak from my own feelings: he survived to finish his book and to conduct, with such a great success, the tercentenary. Ah, how many die just upon the threshold! Had he died a year ago, how great a disappointment! But all this is nothing to the survivors. Do please, as soon as you are able, let us know how it goes and *how it is likely to go* with the family; and believe that both my wife and I are most anxious to have good news, or the best possible. My poor Coggie, I know very well how you must feel; you are passing a bad time. 1885 ÆT. 34

Our news must seem very impertinent. We have both been ill; I, pretty bad, my wife, pretty well down; but I, at least, am better. The Bogue, who is let out every night for half an hour's yapping, is anchored in the moonlight just before the door, and, under the belief that he is watchdog at a lone farm beleaguered by moss-troopers, is simply raising Cain.

I can add nothing more, but just that we wish to hear as soon as you have nothing else to do—not to hurry, of course,—if it takes three months, no matter—but bear us in mind. R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson was by this time beginning to realise that work at play-writing in collaboration with Mr. Henley was doing much more to exhaust his strength than to replenish either of their purses, and Mr. Henley, who had built hopes of fame and fortune on their collaboration, was very unwilling to face the fact.

[BOURNEMOUTH, *March, 1885*.]

MY DEAR LAD,—That is all right, and a good job. About coming down, you cannot get into us for a while, as you may imagine; we are in desperate vortex, and everybody 'most dead. I have been two days in bed with liver and slight bleeding.

Do you think you are right to send *Macaire* and the *Admiral* about? Not a copy have I sent, nor (speaking for myself personally) do I want sent. The reperusal

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of the *Admiral*, by the way, was a sore blow; eh, God, man, it is a low, black, dirty, blackguard, ragged piece: vomitable in many parts—simply vomitable. Pew is in places a reproach to both art and man. But of all that afterwards. What I mean is that I believe in playing dark with second and third-rate work. *Macaire* is a piece of job-work, hurriedly bockled; might have been worse, might have been better; happy-go-lucky; act it or-let-it-rot piece of business. Not a thing, I think, to send in presentations. Do not let us *gober* ourselves—and, above all, not *gober* dam pot-boilers—and p.b.'s with an obvious flaw and hole in them, such as is our unrealised Bertrand in this one. But of this also, on a meeting.

I am not yet done with my proofs, I am sorry to say; so soon as I am, I must tackle *Kidnapped* seriously, or be content to have no bread, which you would scarcely recommend. It is all I shall be able to do to wait for the *Young Folk* money, on which I 'll have to live as best I can till the book comes in.

Plays at that rate I do not think I can possibly look at before July; so let that be a guide to you in your views. July, or August, or September, or thereabouts: these must be our times, whichever we attack. I think you had better suspend a visit till we can take you in and till I can speak. It seems a considerable waste of money; above all, as just now I could not even offer you meals with my woman in such a state of overwork. My father and mother have had to go to lodgings.—Post.

R. L. S.

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TO W. E. HENLEY

[BOURNEMOUTH, *March, 1885.*]

DEAR LAD,—Much better, but rather unequal to do what I ought, a common complaint. The change of weather much helped me, not too soon.

I have thought as well as I could of what you said; and I come unhesitatingly to the opinion that the stage is only a lottery, must not be regarded as a trade, and must never be preferred to drudgery. If money comes from any play, let us regard it as a legacy, but never count upon it in our income for the year. In other words, I must go on and drudge at *Kidnapped*, which I hate, and am unfit to do; and you will have to get some journalism somehow. These are my cold and blighting sentiments. It is bad enough to have to live by an art—but to think to live by an art combined with commercial speculation—that way madness lies.

Time is our only friend. The *Admiral*, pulled simply in pieces and about half deleted, will act some day: such is my opinion. I can no more.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH PENNELL

Acknowledging the dedication of an illustrated *Canterbury Pilgrimage.*

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *June, 1885.*]

DEAR SIR AND MADAM,—This horrible delay must be forgiven me. It was not caused by any want of gratitude; but by the desire to acknowledge the dedication

1885 ÆT. 34 more suitably (and to display my wit) in a copy of verses. Well, now I give that up, and tell you in plain prose, that you have given me much pleasure by the dedication of your graceful book.

As I was writing the above, I received a visit from Lady Shelley, who mentioned to me that she was reading Mrs. Pennell's *Mary Wollstonecraft* with pleasure. It is odd how streams cross. Mr. Pennell's work, I have, of course, long known and admired: and I believe there was once some talk, on the part of Mr. Gilder, that we should work together; but the scheme fell through from my rapacity; and since then has been finally rendered impossible (or so I fear) by my health.

I should say that when I received the *Pilgrimage*, I was in a state (not at all common with me) of depression; and the pleasant testimony that my work had not all been in vain did much to set me up again. You will therefore understand, late as is the hour, with what sincerity I am able to sign myself—Gratefully yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

MR. AND MRS. PENNELL,—I see I should explain that this is all in my own hand, I have not fobbed you off with an amanuensis; but as I have two handwritings (both equally bad in these days) I might lead you to think so.

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Evidently written about the 10th of June, after his return from a visit to London and Cambridge, and after the decision of Mr. Gladstone to dissolve Parliament on the defeat of the Home Rule Bill (June 8). As to the *Travelling Companion*, see above, p. 183.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *June, 1885.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am in bed again—bloodie jackery and be damned to it. Lloyd is better, I think; and money matters better; only my rascal carcase, and the muddy and oily lees of what was once my immortal soul, are in a poor and pitiful condition.

LITANY

Damn the political situation
” you
” me
and
” Gladstone.

I am a kind of dam home ruler, worse luck to it. I would support almost anything but that bill. How am I to vote? Great Cæsar's Ghost!—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O! the *Travelling Companion* won't do; I am back on it entirely: it is a foul, gross, bitter, ugly daub, with lots of stuff in it, and no urbanity and no glee and no true tragedy—to the crows with it, a carrion tale! I will do no more carrion, I have done too much in this carrion epoch; I will now be clean; and by clean, I don't mean

1885 ÆT. 34 any folly about purity, but such things as a healthy man shall find fit to see and speak about without a pang of nausea.—I am, yours,
A REPENTANT DANKIST.

The lakeists, the drainists, the brookists, and the riverites; let me be a brookist, *faute de mieux*.

I did enjoy myself in town, and was a thousandfold the better of it.

TO C. HOWARD CARRINGTON

In answer to an inquiry from a correspondent not personally known to him, who had by some means heard of the *Great North Road* project.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *June 9th* [*1885*].

DEAR SIR,—*The Great North Road* is still unfinished; it is scarce I should say beyond Highgate: but it will be finished some day, bar the big accident. It will not however gratify your taste; the highwayman is not grasped: what you would have liked (and I, believe me) would have been *Jerry Abershaw:* but Jerry was not written at the fit moment; I have outgrown the taste—and his romantic horse-shoes clatter faintlier down the incline towards Lethe.—Truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. DE MATTOS

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *Summer, 1885*.

MY DEAR KATHARINE,—'T is the most complete blague and folly to write to you; you never answer and, even when you do, your letters crackle under the teeth like

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ÆT. 34

ashes; containing nothing as they do but unseasonable japes and a great cloudy vagueness as of the realm of chaos. In this I know well they are like mine; and it becomes me well to write such—but not you—for reasons too obvious to mention. We have both been sick; but to-day I am up, though with an aching back. But I hope all will be better. Of your views, state, finances, etc. etc., I know nothing. We were mighty near the end of all things financially, when a strange shape of a hand giving appeared in Heaven or from Hell, and set us up again for the moment; yet still we totter on a whoreson brink. I beg pardon. I forgot I was writing to a lady; but the word shall stay: it is the only word; I would say it to the Q——n of E——d.

How do you like letters of this kind? It is your kind. They mean nothing; they are blankly insignificant; and impudently put one in the wrong. One has learnt nothing; and forsooth one must reply.—Yours, the Inexpressive Correspondent, R. L. S.

Hey-ey-ey! Sold again. Hey-ey-ey!
Postscript: sold again.

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

Continued

(JANUARY, 1886–JULY, 1887)

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

Continued

(JANUARY, 1886–JULY, 1887)

TO CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

1886
ÆT. 35

"The lad" is Lloyd Osbourne, at this time a student at Edinburgh University.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *Jan. 18th, 1886.*

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—I hear the lad has got into the Spec. and I write to thank you very warmly for the part you have played. I only wish we were both going there together to-morrow night, and you would be in the secretary's place (that so well became you, sir) and I were to open a debate or harry you on "Private Business," and Omond perhaps to read us a few glowing pages on—the siege of Saragossa, was it? or the Battle of Saratoga? my memory fails me, but I have not forgotten a certain white charger that careered over the fields of incoherent fight with a prodigious consequence of laughter: have you? I wonder, has Omond?

Well, well, *perierunt*, but, I hope, *non imputantur*. We have had good fun.

Again thanking you sincerely, I remain, my dear Guthrie, your old comrade,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

1886
ÆT. 35

TO EDMUND GOSSE

Concerning the payment which Mr. Gosse had procured him from an American magazine for the set of verses addressed to Mr. Low (see Letters, Vol. II, p. 12).

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *Feb. 17, 1886.*]

DEAR GOSSE,—Non, c'est honteux! for a set of shambling lines that don't know whether they 're trochees or what they are, that you or any of the crafty ones would blush all over if you had so much as thought upon, all by yourselves, in the water-closet. But God knows, I am glad enough of five pounds; and this is almost as honest a way to get it as plain theft, so what should I care?—Ever yours, R. L. S.

TO F. W. H. MYERS

In reply to a paper of criticisms on *Jekyll and Hyde*.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *March 1st, 1886.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I know not how to thank you: this is as handsome as it is clever. With almost every word I agree—much of it I even knew before—much of it, I must confess, would never have been, if I had been able to do what I like, and lay the thing by for the matter of a year. But the wheels of Byles the Butcher drive exceeding swiftly, and *Jekyll* was conceived, written, re-written, re-rewritten, and printed inside ten weeks. Nothing but this white-hot haste would explain the gross error of Hyde's speech at Lanyon's. Your point about the specialised fiend is more subtle, but not less just: I had not seen it.—About the picture, I rather meant that Hyde had brought it himself; and Utterson's hypothesis of the gift (p. 42) an error.—The tidiness of the room, I thought, but I dare say my psychology is here too ingenious to be sound, was due to the dread weariness and horror of the imprisonment. Something has to be done: he would tidy the room. But I dare say it is false. 1886 ÆT. 35

I shall keep your paper; and if ever my works come to be collected, I will put my back into these suggestions. In the meanwhile, I do truly lack words in which to express my sense of gratitude for the trouble you have taken. The receipt of such a paper is more than a reward for my labours. I have read it with pleasure, and as I say, I hope to use it with profit.—Believe me, your most obliged,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Written just before a visit to London; not, this time, as my guest at the British Museum, but to stay with his father at an hotel in Fitzroy Square.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *March, 1886.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been reading the Vth and VIth *Aeneid*—the latter for the first time—and am overpowered. That is one of the most astonishing pieces of literature, or rather it contains the best, I ever met with. We are all damned small fry, and Virgil is one of the tops of human achievement; I never appreciated this; you should have a certain age to feel this; it is no book for boys, who grind under the lack of enterprise and dash, and pass ignorantly over miracles of performances that leave an old hoary-headed practitioner like me stricken down with admiration. Even as a boy, the Sibyl would

1886 ÆT. 35 have bust me; but I never read the VIth till I began it two days ago; it is all fresh and wonderful; do you envy me? If only I knew any Latin! if you had a decent edition with notes—many notes—I should like well to have it; mine is a damned Didot with not the ghost of a note, type that puts my eyes out, and (I suspect) no very splendid text—but there, the carnal feelings of the man who can't construe are probably parents to the suspicion.

My dear fellow, I would tenfold rather come to the Monument; but my father is an old man, and if I go to town, it shall be (this time) for his pleasure. He has many marks of age, some of childhood; I wish this knighthood business could come off, though even the talk of it has been already something, but the change (to my eyes) is thoroughly begun; and a very beautiful, simple, honourable, high-spirited and childlike (and childish) man is now in process of deserting us piecemeal. *Si quis piorum*—God knows, not that he was pious, but he did his hand's darg or tried to do it; and if not,—well, it is a melancholy business.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Written after his return from an excursion to Matlock with his father, following on their visit to London. "The verses" means *Underwoods.* The suppressed poem is that headed "To———," afterwards printed in *Songs of Travel.*

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *April, 1886.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is to announce to you, what I believe should have been done sooner, that we are at Skerryvore. We were both tired, and I was fighting my second cold, so we came straight through by the west.

We have a butler! He doesn't buttle, but the point of the thing is the style. When Fanny gardens, he stands over her and looks genteel. He opens the door, and I am told waits at table. Well, what 's the odds; I shall have it on my tomb—"He ran a butler."

He may have been this and that,
  A drunkard or a guttler;
He may have been bald and fat—
  At least he kept a butler.

He may have sprung from ill or well,
  From Emperor or sutler;
He may be burning now in Hell—
  On earth he kept a butler.

I want to tell you also that I have suppressed your poem. I shall send it you for yourself, and I hope you will agree with me that it was not good enough in point of view of merit, and a little too intimate as between you and me. I would not say less of you, my friend, but I scarce care to say so much in public while we live. A man may stand on his own head; it is not fair to set his friend on a pedestal.

The verses are now at press; I have written a damn fine ballad.—And I am, dear S. C., ever yours,

TOMNODDY.

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Accompanying a presentation copy of *Kidnapped.* Alison Cunningham's maiden name had been Hastie.

[BOURNEMOUTH, *July, 1886.*]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—Herewith goes my new book, in which you will find some places that you know: I hope you will like it: I do. The name of the girl at Limekilns (as will appear if the sequel is ever written) was Hastie, and I conceive she was an ancestor of yours: as David was no doubt some kind of relative of mine.

I have no time for more, but send my love, and remembrances to your brother.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Hecky was a dog belonging to his correspondent's brother. Stevenson was always interested by his own retentiveness of memory for childish things, and here asks Cummy some questions to test the quality of hers.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *July, 1886.*]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—I was sorry to get so poor account of you and Hecky. Fanny thinks perhaps it might be Hecky's teeth. Sir Walter Simpson has a very clever vet. I have forgotten his name; but if you like, I send a card and you or James might ask the address.

Now to what is more important. Do you remember any of the following names: Lady Boothroyd, Barny Gee, Andrew Silex, the Steward, Carus Rearn, Peter Mangles, Richard Markham, Fiddler Dick? Please let me know and I will tell you how I come to ask. I warn you, you will have to cast back your eyes a good long way, close upon thirty years, before you strike the trail on which I wish to lead you.

When I have had an answer I will write you a decent letter. To-day, though nothing much is wrong with me, I am out of sorts and most disinclined for writing.—Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Anticipating the gift of a cupboard and answering the questions set in his last. The date of the readings had been his seventh year. Mr. Galpin was a partner in Cassell, Petter, Galpin, & Co.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH,
July or August, 1886.]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—The cupboard has not yet turned up, and I was hanging on to be able to say it had. However, that is only a trick to escape another letter, and I should despise myself if I kept it up. It was truly kind of you, dear Cummy, to send it to us: and I will let you know where we set it and how it looks.

Carus Rearn and Andrew Silex and the others were from a story you read me in *Cassell's Family Paper*, and which I have been reading again and found by no means a bad story. Mr. Galpin lent me all the old volumes, and I mean to re-read *Custaloga* also, but have not yet. It was strangely like old times to read the other; don't you remember the poisoning with mushrooms? That was Andrew Silex.—Yours most affectionately, R. L. S.

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TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *September, 1886.*

MY DEAR CUMMY,—I am home from a long holiday, vastly better in health. My wife not home yet, as she is being cured in some rather boisterous fashion by some Swedish doctors. I hope it may do her good, as the process seems not to be agreeable in itself.

Your cupboard has come, and it is most beautiful: it is certainly worth a lot of money, and is just what we have been looking for in all the shops for quite a while: so your present falls very pat. It is to go in our bedroom, I think; but perhaps my wife will think it too much of a good thing to be put so much out of the way, so I shall not put it in its place till her return. I am so well that I am afraid to speak of it, being a coward as to boasting. I take walks in the wood daily, and have got back to my work after a long break. The story I wrote you about was one you read to me in *Cassell's Family Paper* long ago when it came out. It was astonishing how clearly I remembered it all, pictures, characters, and incidents, though the last were a little mixed and I had not the least the hang of the story. It was very pleasant to read it again, and remember old days, and the weekly excursion to Mrs. Hoggs after that precious journal. Dear me, lang syne now! God bless you, dear Cummy.—Your afft. boy, R. L. STEVENSON.

TO AUGUSTE RODIN

Written after another visit to me in London, in November, which had been cut short by fogs. "Le Printemps" is Rodin's group so called.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH,
November or December, 1886-87.

MON CHER AMI,—Il y a bien longtemps déjà que je vous dois des lettres par dizaines; mais bien que je vais mieux, je ne vais toujours que doucement. Il a fallu faire le voyage à Bournemouth comme une fuite en Egypte, par crainte des brouillards qui me tuaient; et j'en ressentais beaucoup de fatigue. Mais maintenant celà commence à aller, et je puis vous donner de mes nouvelles.

Le Printemps est arrivé, mais il avait le bras cassé, et nous l'avons laissé, lors de notre fuite, aux soins d'un médecin-de-statues. Je l'attends de jour en jour; et ma maisonette en resplendira bientôt. Je regrette beaucoup le dédicace; peut-être, quand vous viendrez nous voir, ne serait-il pas trop tard de l'ajouter? Je n'en sais rien, je l'espère. L'œuvre c'est pour tout le monde; le dédicace est pour moi. L'œuvre est un cadeau, trop beau même; c'est le mot d'amitié qui me le donne pour de bon. Je suis si bête que je m'embrouille, et me perds; mais vous me comprendrez, je pense.

Je ne puis même pas m'exprimer en anglais; comment voudriez vous que je le pourrais en français? Plus heureux que vous, la Némésis des arts ne me visite pas sous le masque du désenchantement; elle me suce l'intelligence et me laisse bayer aux corneilles, sans capacité mais sans regret; sans éspérance, c'est vrai, mais aussi, Dieu merci, sans désespoir. Un doux étonnement me tient; je ne m'habitue pas à me trouver si bûche, mais je m'y résigne;

même si celà durait, ce ne serait pas désagréable—mais comme je mourrais certainement de faim, ce serait tout au moins regrettable pour moi et ma famille.

Je voudrais pouvoir vous écrire; mais ce n'est pas moi qui tiens la plume—c'est l'autre, la bête, celui qui ne connaît pas le Français, celui qui n'aime pas mes amis comme je les aime, qui ne goûte pas aux choses de l'art comme j'y goûte; celui que je renie, mais auquel je commande toujours assez pour le faire prendre la plume en main et écrire des tristes bavardages. Celui-là, mon cher Rodin, vous ne l'aimez pas; vous ne devez jamais le connaître. Votre ami, qui dort à present, comme un ours, au plus profond de mon être, se réveillera sous peu. Alors, il vous écrira de sa propre main. Attendez lui. L'autre ne compte pas; ce ne'st qu'un secretaire infidèle et triste, à l'âme gelée, à la tête de bois.

Celui qui dort est toujours, mon cher ami, bien à vous; celui qui écrit est chargé de vous en faire part et de signer de la raison sociale.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON ET TRIPLE-BRUTE.

TO LADY TAYLOR

Stevenson's volume of tales *The Merry Men*, so called from the story which heads the collection, was about to appear with a dedication to Lady Taylor. Professor Dowden's *Shelley* had lately come out, and had naturally been read with eager interest in a circle where Sir Percy (the poet's son) and Lady Shelley were intimate friends and neighbours.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH
[*New Year, 1887*].

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—This is to wish you all the salutations of the year, with some regret that I cannot

offer them in person; yet less than I had supposed. For hitherto your flight to London seems to have worked well; and time flies and will soon bring you back again. Though time is ironical, too; and it would be like his irony if the same tide that brought you back carried me away. That would not be, at least, without some meeting.

I feel very sorry to think the book to which I have put your name will be no better, and I can make it no better. The tales are of all dates and places; they are like the box, the goose, and the cottage of the ferryman; and must go floating down time together as best they can. But I am after all a (superior) penny-a-liner; I must do, in the Scotch phrase, as it will do with me; and I cannot always choose what my books are to be, only seize the chance they offer to link my name to a friend's. I hope the lot of them (the tales) will look fairly disciplined when they are clapped in binding; but I fear they will be but an awkward squad. I have a mild wish that you at least would read them no further than the dedication.

I suppose we have all been reading Dowden. It seems to me a really first-rate book, full of justice, and humour without which there can be no justice; and of fine intelligence besides. Here and there, perhaps a trifle precious, but this is to spy flaws in a fine work. I was weary at my resemblances to Shelley; I seem but a Shelley with less oil, and no genius; though I have had the fortune to live longer and (partly) to grow up. He was growing up. There is a manlier note in the last days; in spite of such really sickening aberrations as the Emillia Viviani business. I try to take a humorously-genial view of life; but Emillia Viviani, if I have her detested name aright,[1] is too much for my philosophy. I cannot smile when I see all these grown folk waltzing and piping the eye about an insubordinate and perfectly abominable schoolgirl, as silly and patently as false as Blanche Amory.[1] I really think it is one of those episodes that make the angels weep.

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[1] As in fact he had, all except the double l.

With all kind regards and affectionate good wishes to and for you and yours, believe me, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO LADY TAYLOR

The reference in the last paragraph to a "vision" cannot be explained, his correspondent's daughters retaining no memory on the subject.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *January, 1887.*]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I don't know but what I agree fairly well with all you say, only I like *The Merry Men*, as a fantasia or vision of the sea, better than you do. The trouble with *Olalla* is that it somehow sounds false; and I think it must be this that gives you the feeling of irreverence. Of *Thrawn Janet*, which I like very much myself, you say nothing, thus uttering volumes; but it is plain that people cannot always agree. I do not think it is a wholesome part of me that broods on the evil in the world and man; but I do not think that I get harm from it; possibly my readers may, which is more serious; but at any account, I do not purpose to write more in this vein. But the odd problem is: what makes a story true? *Markheim* is true; *Olalla* false; and I don't know why, nor did I feel it while I worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with *Olalla*, as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; I admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: why is it false? 1887 ÆT. 36

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[1] In *Pendennis*.

Here is a great deal about my works. I am in bed again; and my wife but so-so; and we have no news recently from Lloyd: and the cat is well; and we see, or I see, no one; so that other matters are all closed against me.

Your vision is strange indeed; but I see not how to use it; I fear I am earthy enough myself to regard it as a case of disease, but certainly it is a thrilling case to hear of.—Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO HENRY JAMES

This letter is written on the front page of a set of proofs of *Memories and Portraits.* The "silly Xmas story" is *The Misadventures of John Nicholson:* the "volume of verse" appeared later in the year as *Underwoods.* The signature refers to the two Scots poets of whom, "in his native speech," he considered himself the follower.

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *January, 1887.*

All the salutations!

MY DEAR JAMES,—I send you the first sheets of the new volume, all that has yet reached me, the rest shall follow in course. I am really a very fair sort of a fellow all things considered, have done some work; a silly Xmas story (with some larks in it) which won't be out till I don't know when. I am also considering a volume of verse, much of which will be cast in my native speech, 1887 ÆT. 36 that very dark oracular medium: I suppose this is a folly, but what then? As the nurse says in Marryat, "It was only a little one."

My wife is peepy and dowie: two Scotch expressions with which I will leave you to wrestle unaided, as a preparation for my poetical works. She is a woman (as you know) not without art: the art of extracting the gloom of the eclipse from sunshine; and she has recently laboured in this field not without success or (as we used to say) not without a blessing. It is strange: "we fell out my wife and I" the other night; she tackled me savagely for being a canary-bird; I replied (bleatingly) protesting that there was no use in turning life into King Lear; presently it was discovered that there were two dead combatants upon the field, each slain by an arrow of the truth, and we tenderly carried off each other's corpses. Here is a little comedy for Henry James to write! the beauty was each thought the other quite unscathed at first. But we had dealt shrewd stabs.

You say nothing of yourself, which I shall take to be good news. Archer's note has gone. He is, in truth, a very clever fellow that Archer, and I believe a good one. It is a pleasant thing to see a man who can use a pen; he can: really says what he means, and says it with a manner; comes into print like one at his ease, not shame-faced and wrong-foot-foremost like the bulk of us. Well, here is luck, and here are the kindest recollections from the canary-bird and from King Lear, from the Tragic Woman and the Flimsy Man.

ROBERT RAMSAY FERGUSSON STEVENSON.

TO AUGUSTE RODIN

SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *February*, *1887*.

MON CHER AMI,—Je vous néglige, et cependant ce n'est véritablement pas de ma faute. J'ai fait encore une maladie; et je puis dire que je l'ai royalement bien faite. Que celà vous aide à me pardonner. Certes je ne vous oublie pas; et je puis dire que je ne vous oublierai jamais. Si je n'écris pas, dîtes que je suis malade—c'est trop souvent vrai, dîtes que je suis las d'écrivailler—ce sera toujours vrai; mais ne dîtes pas, et ne pensez pas, que je deviens indifférent. J'ai devant moi votre portrait tiré d'un journal anglais (et encadré à mes frais), et je le regarde avec amitié, je le regarde même avec une certaine complaisance—dirai-je, de faux aloi? comme un certificat de jeunesse. Je me croyais trop vieux—au moins trop quarante-ans—pour faire de nouveaux amis; et quand je regarde votre portrait, et quand je pense au plaisir de vous revoir, je sens que je m'étais trompé. Écrivez-moi donc un petit mot, pour me dire que vous ne gardez pas rancune de mon silence, et que vous comptez bientôt venir en Angleterre. Si vous tardez beaucoup, ce sera moi qui irai vous relancer.—Bien à vous, mon cher ami,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I had lately sent him two books, the fifth volume of Huxley's *Collected Essays* and Cotter Morison's *Service of Man:* the latter a work of Positivist tendency, on which its genial and accomplished author had long built strong hopes, but which unfortunately he only began to write after a rapid decline of health and power had set in.

[SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH, *Spring*, *1887*.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I read Huxley, and a lot of it with great interest. Eh, what a gulf between a man with a

mind like Huxley and a man like Cotter Morison. Truly 't is the book of a boy; before I was twenty I was done with all these considerations. Nor is there one happy phrase, except "the devastating flood of children." Why should he din our ears with languid repetitions of the very first ideas and facts that a bright lad gets hold of; and how can a man be so destitute of historical perspective, so full of cheap outworn generalisations—feudal ages, time of suffering—*pas tant qu'aujourdhui,* M. Cotter! Christianity—which? what? how? You must not attack all forms, from Calvin to St. Thomas, from St. Thomas to (One who should surely be considered) Jesus Christ, with the same missiles: they do not all tell against all. But there it is, as we said; a man joins a sect, and becomes one-eyed. He affects a horror of vices which are just the thing to stop his "devastating flood of babies," and just the thing above all to keep the vicious from procreating. Where, then, is the ground of this horror in any intelligent Servant of Humanity? O, beware of creeds and anti-creeds, sects and anti-sects. There is but one truth, outside science, the truth that comes of an earnest, smiling survey of mankind "from China to Peru," or further, and from to-day to the days of Probably Arboreal; and the truth (however true it is) that robs you of sympathy with any form of thought or trait of man, is false for you, and heretical, and heretico-plastic. Hear Morison struggling with his chains; hear me, hear all of us, when we suffer our creeds or anti-creeds to degenerate towards the whine, and begin to hate our neighbours, or our ancestors, like ourselves. And yet in Morison, too, as in St. Thomas, as in Rutherford, ay, or in Peden, truth struggles, or it would not so deform them. The man has not a devil; it is an angel that tears and blinds him. But Morison's is an old, almost a venerable seraph, with whom I dealt before I was twenty, and had done before I was twenty-five. 1887 ÆT. 36

Behold how the voices of dead preachers speak hollowly (and lengthily) within me!—Yours ever—and rather better—not much,
R. L. S.

IX

THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

(OCTOBER, 1887-MAY, 1888)

IX

THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

(OCTOBER, 1887–MAY, 1888)

TO SIR WALTER SIMPSON

1887
ÆT. 36

It was supposed that Stevenson's letters to this friend, like those to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, had been destroyed or disappeared altogether. But here is one which turns out to have been preserved by a friend to whom Sir Walter made a present of it.

[SARANAC LAKE, *October, 1887*.]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,
the address is
c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,
743 Broadway, N. Y.,

where I wish you would write and tell us you are better. But the place of our abode is Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; it is a mighty good place too, and I mean it shall do me good. Indeed the dreadful depression and collapse of last summer has quite passed away; it was a thorough change I wanted; I wonder perhaps if it wouldn't pick you up—if you are not picked up already; you have been a long time in Great Britain; and that is a slow poison, very slow for the strong, but certain for all. Old Dr. Chepmell told Lloyd: any one can stay a year in England and be the better for it, but no one can stay there steadily and not be the worse.

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I have had a very curious experience here; being very much made of, and called upon, and all that; quite the famous party in fact: it is not so nice as people try to make out, when you are young, and don't want to bother working. Fame is nothing to a yacht; *experto crede*. There are nice bits of course; for you meet very pleasant and interesting people; but the thing at large is a bore and a fraud; and I am much happier up here, where I see no one and live my own life. One thing is they do not stick for money to the Famed One; I was offered £2000 a year for a weekly article; and I accepted (and now enjoy) £720 a year for a monthly one: $\frac{720}{12}$ (whatever that may be) for each article, as long or as short as I please, and on any mortal subject. I am sure it will do me harm to do it; but the sum was irresistible. See calculations on verso of last page, and observe, sir, the accuracy of my methods.

Hulloh, I must get up, as I can't lose any time. Good-bye, remember me to her ladyship and salute the Kids.—Ever your friend, R. L. S.

$12 : 10 :: 72 : x$, and this results in the
same problem. Well—tackle it.
12)720(60
72
Is it possible?
£60!!??
Let us cheque it by trying it in dollars, $3500 per an.
12)3500(291.80
24
110
108
20

Well : $291.80
then divide by 5 for a rough test
5)291(58. 4. 4
25 add 80 cents=40*d.*=3. 4*d.*
3. 4
£58. 7. 8
Well, call it
£58. 10.

and be done with it!

TO CHARLES FAIRCHILD

POST OFFICE, SARANAC LAKE,
ADIRONDACKS, N. Y. [*October, 1887*].

MY DEAR FAIRCHILD,—I do not live in the Post Office; that is only my address; I live at "Baker's," a house upon a hill, and very jolly in every way. I believe this is going to do: we have a kind of a garret of a spare room, where hardy visitors can sleep, and our table (if homely) is not bad.

And here, appropriately enough, comes in the begging part. We cannot get any fruit here: can you manage to send me some grapes? I told you I would trouble you, and I will say that I do so with pleasure, which means a great deal from yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Remember us to all yours: my mother and my wife are away skylarking; my mother to Niagara, my wife to Indianapolis; and I live here to-day alone with Lloyd, 1887 ÆT. 36 Valentine, some cold meat, and four salmon trout, one of which is being grilled at this moment of writing; so that, after the immortal pattern of the Indian boys, my household will soon only reckon three. As usual with me, the news comes in a P.S., and is mostly folly. R. L. S.

P.P.S.—My cold is so much better that I took another yesterday. But the new one is a puny child; I fear him not; and yet I fear to boast. If the postscript business goes on, this establishment will run out of P's; but I hope it wasn't you that made this paper—just for a last word—I could not compliment you upon that. And Lord! if you could see the ink—not what I am using—but the local vintage! They don't write much here; I bet what you please. R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

"Gleeson White" in this letter means the collection of *Ballades, Rondeaus, &c.*, edited by that gentleman and dedicated to R. L. S. (Walter Scott, 1887).

[SARANAC LAKE, *October, 1887.*]

MY DEAR LAD,—I hear some vague reports of a success[1] at Montreal.

My news is not much, my mother is away to Niagara and Fanny to Indiana; the Port Admiral and I and Valentine keep house together in our verandahed cottage near a wood. I am writing, and have got into the vein. When I got to N. Y. a paper offered me £2000 a year to do critical weekly articles for them; the sum was so enormous that I tottered; however, Scribner at once offered me the same scale to give him a monthly paper in his magazine; indeed it is rather higher, £720 for the twelve papers. This I could not decently refuse; and I am now a yoked man, and after a fit of my usual impotence under bondage, seem to have got into the swing. I suppose I shall scarce manage to do much else; but there is the fixed sum, which shines like a sun in the firmament. A prophet has certainly a devil of a lot of honour (and much coins) in another country, whatever he has in his own.

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[1] Of the play *Deacon Brodie.*

I got Gleeson White; your best work and either the best or second best in the book is the *Ballade in Hot Weather;* that is really a masterpiece of melody and fancy. Damn your Villanelles—and everybody's. G. Macdonald comes out strong in his two pious rondels; *Fons Bandusiæ* seems as exquisite as ever. To my surprise, I liked two of the Pantoums, the blue-bottle, and the still better after-death one from *Love in Idleness.* Lang cuts a poor figure, except in the Cricket one; your patter ballade is a great *tour de force*, but spoiled by similar cæsuras. On the whole 't is a ridiculous volume, and I had more pleasure out of it than I expected. I forgot to praise Grant Allen's excellent ballade, which is the one that runs with yours,—and here, to the point, a note from you at Margate—among East Winds and Plain Women, damn them! Well, what can we do or say? We are only at Saranac for the winter; and if this *Deacon* comes off, why you may join us there in glory; I would I had some news of it. Saranac is not *quite* so dear, in some ways, as the rest of this land, where it costs you a pound to sneeze, and fifty to blow your nose; but even here it costs $2.50 to get a box from the station! Think

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of it! Lift it up tenderly! They had need to pay well! but how poor devils live; and how it can pay to take a theatre company over to such a land, is more than I can fancy. The devil of the States for you is the conveyances, they are so dear—but O, what is not!

I have thrown off my cold in excellent style, though still very groggy about the knees, so that when I climb a paling, of which we have many, I feel as precarious and nutatory as a man of ninety. Under this I grind; but I believe the place will suit me. Must stop.—Ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

[SARANAC LAKE, *March 31, 1888.*]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Why so plaintive? Either the post-office has played us false, or you were in my debt. In case it should be my letter that has failed to come to post, I must tell again the fate of Mrs. Gosse's thermometer. It hangs in our sitting-room, where it has often marked freezing point and below; "See what Gosse says," is a common word of command. But the point is this: in the verandah hangs another thermometer, condemned to register minus 40° and the class of temperatures; and to him, we have given the name of the Quarterly Reviewer. I hope the jape likes you.

Please tell the *Fortnightly* man that I am sorry but I can do nothing of that sort this year, as I am under a pledge to Scribner's; and indeed my monthly articles take the best of my time. It was a project I went into with horrid diffidence; and lucre was my only motive. I get on better than I expected, but it is difficult to find an article of the sort required for each date, and to vary the matter and keep up (if possible) the merit. I do not know if you think I have at all succeeded; it seemed to me this really worked paper was more money's worth (as well as probably better within my means) than the Lang business at the Sign of the Ship. Indeed I feel convinced I could never have managed that; it takes a gift to do it. Here is lunch.—Yours afftly., R. L. S.

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TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Having spent the last fortnight of April at New York, Stevenson and his stepson moved at the beginning of May to the small New Jersey watering-place from whence the following letters are dated: his wife having meanwhile gone to San Francisco, where she presently made arrangements for the Pacific yachting trip.

UNION HOUSE, MANASQUAN, NEW JERSEY
[*May, 1888*].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—We are here at a delightful country inn, like a country French place, the only people in the house, a cat-boat at our disposal, the sea always audible on the outer beach, the lagoon as smooth as glass, all the little, queer, many coloured villas standing shuttered and empty; in front of ours, across the lagoon, two long wooden bridges; one for the rail, one for the road, sounding with intermittent traffic. It is highly pleasant, and a delightful change from Saranac. My health is much better for the change; I am sure I walked about four miles yesterday, one time with another—well, say three and a half; and the day before, I was out for four hours in the cat-boat, and was as stiff as a board in consequence. More letters call.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

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TO LADY TAYLOR

[MANASQUAN, *May, 1888.*]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I have to announce our great news. On June 15th we sail from San Francisco in the schooner yacht *Casco,* for a seven months' cruise in the South Seas. You can conceive what a state of excitement we are in; Lloyd perhaps first; but this is an old dream of mine which actually seems to be coming true, and I am sun-struck. It seems indeed too good to be true; and that we have not deserved so much good fortune. From Skerryvore to the Galapagos is a far cry! And from poking in a sick-room all winter to the deck of one's own ship, is indeed a heavenly change.

All these seven months I doubt if we can expect more than three mails at the best of it: and I do hope we may hear something of your news by each. I have no very clear views as to where the three addresses ought to be, but if you hear no later news, Charles Scribner's Sons will always have the run of our intended movements. And an early letter there would probably catch us at the Sandwich Islands. Tahiti will probably be the second point: and (as I roughly guess) Quito the third. But the whole future is invested with heavenly clouds.

I trust you are all well and content, and have good news of the Shelleys, to whom I wish you would pass on ours. They should be able to sympathise with our delight.

Now I have all my miserable *Scribner* articles to rake together in the inside of a fortnight: so you must not expect me to be more copious. I have you all in the kindest memory, and am, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Remember me to Aubrey de Vere.

X

PACIFIC VOYAGES

(DECEMBER, 1888–SEPTEMBER, 1890)

X

PACIFIC VOYAGES

(DECEMBER, 1888–SEPTEMBER, 1890)

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

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This letter from Mrs. Stevenson serves to fill out and explain allusions in the three or four preceding. The beautiful brown princess is Princess Moë, ex-queen of Raiatea, well known to readers of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon Cumming. The move away from Papeete, where Stevenson had fallen seriously ill, had been made in hopes of finding on the island a climate that would suit him better.

TAUTIRA, TAHITI, *Dec. 4th* [*1888*].

DEAR, long neglected, though never forgotten Custodian, I write you from fairyland, where we are living in a fairy story, the guests of a beautiful brown princess. We came to stay a week, five weeks have passed, and we are still indefinite as to our time of leaving. It was chance brought us here, for no one in Papeete could tell us a word about this part of the island except that it was very fine to look at, and inhabited by wild people—"almost as wild as the people of Anaho!" That touch about the people of Anaho inclined our hearts this way, so we finally concluded to take a look at the other side of Tahiti. The place of our landing was windy, uninhabited except by mosquitoes, and Louis was ill. The first day Lloyd and the Captain made an exploration, but came back disgusted. They had found a Chinaman, a long way off, who seemed to have some horses, but no desire to hire them to strangers, and they had found nothing else whatever. The next morning I took Valentine and went on a prospecting tour of my own. I found the Chinaman, persuaded him to let me have two horses and a wagon, and went back for the rest of my family. When asked where I wished to go, I could only say to the largest native village and the most wild. Ill as Louis was, I brought him the next day, and shall never cease to be thankful for my courage, for he has gained health and strength every day. He takes sea baths and swims, and lives almost entirely in the open air as nearly without clothes as possible, a simple pyjama suit of striped light flannel his only dress. As to shoes and stockings we all have scorned them for months except Mrs. Stevenson, who often goes barefoot and never, I believe, wears stockings. Lloyd's costume, in which he looks remarkably well, consists of a striped flannel shirt and a pareu. The pareu is no more or less than a large figured blue and white cotton window curtain twisted about the waist, and hanging a little below the bare knees. Both Louis and Lloyd wear wreaths of artificial flowers, made of the dried pandanus leaf, on their hats.

Moë has gone to Papeete by the command of the king, whose letter was addressed "To the great Princess at Tautira. P.V." P.V. stands for Pomaré 5th. Every evening, before she went, we played Van John lying in a circle on pillows in the middle of the floor with our heads together: and hardly an evening passed but it struck us afresh how very much you would like Moë, and we told her of you again. The house (really here a palace) in which we live, belongs to the sub-chief, Ori, a subject

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and relation of the Princess. He, and his whole family, consisting of his wife, his two little adopted sons, his daughter and her two young babies, turned out to live in a little bird-cage hut of one room. Ori is the very finest specimen of a native we have seen yet; he is several inches over six feet, of perfect though almost gigantic proportions, and looks more like a Roman Emperor in bronze than words can express. One day, when Moë gave a feast, it being the correct thing to do, we all wore wreaths of golden yellow leaves on our heads; when Ori walked in and sat down at the table, as with one voice we all cried out in admiration. His manners and I might say his habit of thought are English. In some ways, he is so like a Colonel of the Guards that we often call him Colonel. It was either the day before, or the morning of our public feast, that Louis asked the Princess if she thought Ori would accept his name. She was sure of it, and much pleased at the idea. I wish you could have seen Louis, blushing like a schoolgirl, when Ori came in, and the brotherhood was offered. So now if you please, Louis is no more Louis, having given that name away in the Tahitian form of *Rui*, but is known as *Terii-Tera* (pronounced Ter*ee*terah), that being Ori's Christian name. "Ori of Ori" is his clan name.

Let me tell you of our village feast. The chief, who was our guide in the matter, found four large fat hogs, which Louis bought, and four cases of ship's biscuit were sent over from the *Casco*, which is lying at Papeete for repairs. Our feast cost in all about eighty dollars. Every Sunday all things of public interest are announced in the Farehau (an enormous public bird cage) and the news of the week read aloud from the Papeete journal, if it happens to turn up. Our feast was given on a Wednesday, and was announced by the chief the Sunday before, who referred to Louis as "the rich one." Our hogs were killed in the morning, washed in the sea, and roasted whole in a pit with hot stones. When done they were laid on their stomachs in neat open coffins of green basket work, each hog with his case of biscuits beside him. Early in the morning the entire population began bathing, a bath being the preliminary to everything. At about three o'clock—four was the hour set—there was a general movement towards our premises, so that I had to hurry Louis into his clothes, all white, even to his shoes. Lloyd was also in white, but barefoot. I was not prepared, so had to appear in a red and white muslin gown, also barefoot. As Mrs. Stevenson had had a feast of her own, conducted on religious principles, she kept a little in the background, so that her dress did not matter so much. The chief, who speaks French very well, stood beside Louis to interpret for him. By the time we had taken our respective places on the veranda in front of our door, an immense crowd had assembled. They came in five, instead of four detachments which was what the chief expected, and he was a little confused at first, as he and Louis had been arranging a speech to four sets of people, which ran in this order. The clergyman at the head of the Protestants: the chief, council, and irreligious:—one of the council at their head. The schoolmaster with the schoolchildren: the catechist and the Catholics: but there was another very small sect, by some strange mischance called Mormons, which it was supposed would be broken up and swallowed by the others. But no, the Mormons came in a body alone, marshalled by the best and wittiest speaker

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—bar Rui—in Tautira. Each set of people came bending under the weight of bamboo poles laden with fruits, pigs, fowls, etc. All were dressed in their gayest parius, and many had wreaths of leaves or flowers on their heads. The prettiest sight of all was the children, who came marching two and two abreast, the bamboo poles lying lengthwise across their shoulders.

When all the offerings had been piled in five great heaps upon the ground, Louis made his oration to the accompaniment of the squealing of pigs, the cackling of hens, and the roar of the surf which beats man-high upon the roof. A speech was made in return on behalf of the village, and then each section sent forth its orator, the speeches following in the order I have given above. Each speaker finished by coming forward with one of the smaller things in his hand, which he offered personally to Louis, and then shook hands with us all and retired. Among these smaller presents were many fish-hooks for large fishing, laboriously carved from mother-of-pearl shell. One man came with one egg in each hand, saying, "Carry these to Scotland with you, let them hatch into cocks, and their song shall remind you of Tautira." The schoolmaster, with a leaf-basket of rose apples, made his speech in French. Somehow the whole effect of the scene was like a story out of the Bible, and I am not ashamed that Louis and I both shed tears when we saw the enchanting procession of schoolchildren. The Catholic priest, Father Bruno, a great friend of ours, said that for the next fifty years the time of the feast of the rich one will be talked of: which reminds me of our friend Donat, of Fakarava, who was temporary resident at the time we were there. "I am so glad," he said, "that the *Casco* came in just

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now, otherwise I should be forgotten: but now the people will always say this or that happened so long before — or so long after — the coming of the *Silver Ship*, when Donat represented the government.''

In front of our house is a broad stretch of grass, dotted with cocoanuts, breadfruits, mangoes, and the strange pandanus tree. I wish you could have seen them, their lower branches glowing with the rich colours of the fruits hung upon them by Ori and his men, and great heaps lying piled against their roots, on the evening of our feast. From the bamboo poles that they were carried upon, a pen was made for the ten pigs, and a fowl house for the twenty-three fowls that were among the presents. But there was a day of reckoning at hand. Time after time we ran down to the beach to look for the *Casco*, until we were in despair. For over a month we had lived in Ori's house, causing him infinite trouble and annoyance, and not even his, at that. Areia (the chief — means the Prince) went to Papeete and came back with a letter to say that more work had to be done upon the *Casco*, and it might be any time before she could get to Tautira. We had used up all our stores, and had only a few dollars of money left in Tautira, and not very much in Papeete. Could we stand the journey to Papeete, we could not live upon the yacht in the midst of the workmen, and we had not money enough left to live at an hotel. We were playing cards on the floor, as usual, when this message came, and you can imagine its effect. I knew perfectly well that Rui would force us to stay on with him, but what depressed me the most of all, was the fact of Louis having made brothers with him just before this took place. Had there been a shadow of doubt on our dear Rui's face, I should have fled from before him. Sitting there on the floor waiting for him was too much for my nerves and I burst into tears, upon which the princess wept bitterly. In the meantime the priest had dropped in, so that we had him and Moë, and Areia, as witnesses to our humiliating position. First came Madame Rui, who heard the story, and sat down on the floor in silence, which was very damping for a beginning, and then Ori of Ori, the magnificent, who listened to the tale of the shipwrecked mariners with serious dignity, asking one or two questions, and then spoke to this effect. "You are my brother: all that I have is yours. I know that your food is done, but I can give you plenty of fish and taro. We like you, and wish to have you here. Stay where you are till the *Casco* comes. Be happy—*et ne pleurez pas*." Louis dropped his head into his hands and wept, and then we all went up to Rui and shook hands with him and accepted his offer. Madame Rui, who had been silent only as a dutiful wife, that her husband might speak first, poured forth manifold reasons for our staying on as long as we could possibly manage. During all this scene, an attendant of the princess had been sitting on the floor behind us, a baby in his arms, where he had ensconced himself for the purpose of watching the game. He understood nothing of what was going on; we wondered afterwards what he thought of it. Reduced as we were, we still had a few bottles of champagne left. Champagne being an especial weakness of our gigantic friend, it occurred to some one that this was a proper occasion to open a couple of bottles. Louis, the Princess, and I were quite, as the Scotch so well say, "begrutten," Areia's immense eyes were fairly melting out of his head with emotion, the priest was wiping his eyes and blowing

1888 ÆT. 38 his nose: and then for no apparent cause we suddenly fell to drinking and clinking glasses quite merrily: the bewildered attendant clinked and drank too, and then sat down and waited in case there should be any repetition of the drinking part of the performance. And sure enough there was, for in the midst of an animated discussion as to ways and means, Mrs. Stevenson announced that it was St. Andrew's day, so again the attendant clinked and drank with Ori's mad foreigners.

It is quite true that we live almost entirely upon native food; our luncheon to-day consisted of raw fish with sauce made of cocoanut milk mixed with sea water and lime juice, taro poi-poi, and bananas roasted in hot stones in a little pit in the ground, with cocoanut cream to eat with them. Still we like coffee in the evening, a little wine at dinner, and a few other products of civilisation. It would be possible, the chief said, to send a boat, but that would cost sixty dollars. A final arrangement, which we were forced to accept, was that Rui should go in his own boat, and the chief would appoint a substitute for some public work that he was then engaged upon. Early the next morning, amidst a raging sea and a storming wind, Rui departed with three men to help him. It is forty miles to Papeete, and Rui, starting in the early morning, arrived there at nine o'clock; but alas, the wind was against him, and it was altogether six days before he got back.

Louis has done a great deal of work on his new story, *The Master of Ballantrae*, almost finished it in fact, while Mrs. Stevenson and I are deep in the mysteries of hat-making, which is a ladies' accomplishment taking the place of water-colour drawing in England. It is a small compliment to present a hat to an acquaintance. Altogether we have about thirteen. Next door to us is Areia's out-of-door house, where he and the ladies of his family sleep and eat; it has a thatched roof of palm branches, and a floor of boards, the sides and ends being open to the world. On the floor are spread mats plaited of pandanus leaves, and pillows stuffed with silk cotton from the cotton tree. We make little calls upon the ladies, lie upon the mats, and smoke cigarettes made of tobacco leaves rolled in a bit of dried pandanus, and admire their work, or get a lesson; or they call upon us, and lie upon our mats. One day there was an election in the Farehau. It takes place all over the island once a year, and among others, the sub-chief and head-councillor is chosen. For the latter, our Rui was a candidate. In the beginning, the French deposed the born chiefs and told the people to elect men for themselves. The choice of Tautira fell upon Rui, who declined the honour, saying that Areia was his natural chief, and he could not take a position that should belong to his superior; upon which the people elected Areia chief, and Rui sub-chief and head-councillor. We all went over to the Farehau, where Areia sat in the middle of his councillors on a dais behind a long table. The Farehau is an immense bird-cage of bamboos tied together with pandanus fibre, and thatched with palms. In front of the dais the ground is deeply covered with dried leaves. The costume of the dignitaries was rather odd. Areia wore a white shirt and blue flannel coat, which was well enough; but on his plump legs were a pair of the most incredible trousers: light blue calico with a small red pattern, such as servant girls wear for gowns in England: on his feet were neat little shoes and stockings. Rui was a fine sight, and we were very proud of him; he sat, exactly like an Eng-

1888 ÆT. 38 lish gentleman, holding himself well in hand, alert as a fox and keen as a greyhound: several men spoke from the farther end of the hall, making objections of some sort, we could see. Rui listened with a half satirical, half kindly smile in his eyes, and then dropped a quiet answer without rising from his seat, which had the effect of raising a shout of laughter, and quite demolishing his opponent. Voters came up to the table and dropped their bits of paper into a slit in a box: some led children by the hand, and some carried babies in their arms; across the centre of the great room children and dogs ran chasing each other and playing. I noticed two little maids who walked up and down for a long time with their arms intertwined about each other's waists. Near where we sat (we were on the dais, above the common herd), a pretty young lady having tied up her dog's mouth with a tuft of grass, industriously caught and cracked fleas from its back. Both Lloyd and I grew very sleepy, and as we did not like to leave till the election was decided, we just threw ourselves down and took a nap at the feet of the councillors: nor did we wake till the chief called out to us in English "it is finished." I never thought I should be able to calmly sleep at a public meeting on a platform in the face of several hundred people: but it is wonderful how quickly one takes up the ways of a people when you live with them as intimately as we do.

I hear dinner coming on the table, so with much love from us all to you and other dear ones, including our dear friend Henry James, believe me, affectionately yours,

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

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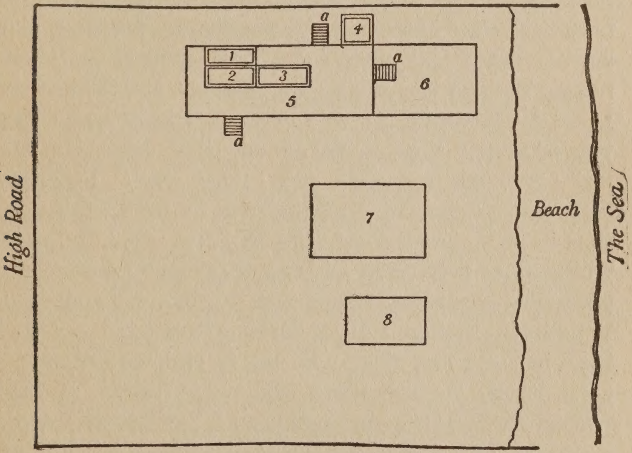
TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Ill-health and pressing preoccupations, together with uncertainty as to when and where letters would reach him, had kept me from writing during the previous autumn and winter.

HONOLULU, *March, 1889.*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Still not a word from you! I am utterly cast down; but I will try to return good for evil and for once give you news. We are here in the suburb of Honolulu in a rambling house or set of houses in a great garden.



a a a, stairs up to balcony.

1. Lloyd's room. 2. My mother's room. 3. A room kept dark for photographs. 4. The kitchen. 5. Balcony. 6. The *Lanai*, an open room or summer parlour, partly

surrounded with Venetian shutters, in part quite open, which is the living-room. 7. A crazy dirty cottage used for the arts. 8. Another crazy dirty cottage, where Fanny and I live. The town is some three miles away, but the house is connected by telephone with the chief shops, and the tramway runs to within a quarter of a mile of us. I find Honolulu a beastly climate after Tahiti and have been in bed a little; but my colds *took on no catarrhal symptom*, which is staggeringly delightful. I am studying Hawaiian with a native, a Mr. Joseph Poepoe, a clever fellow too: the tongue is a little bewildering; I am reading a pretty story in native—no, really it is pretty, although wandering and wordy; highly pretty with its continual traffic from one isle to another of the soothsayer, pursuing rainbows. Fanny is, I think, a good deal better on the whole, having profited like me by the tropics; my mother and Lloyd are first-rate. I do not think I have heard from you since last May; certainly not since June; and this really frightens me. Do write, even now. Scribner's Sons it should be; we shall probably be out of this some time in April, home some time in June. But the world whirls to me perceptibly, a mass of times and seasons and places and engagements, and seas to cross, and continents to traverse, so that I scarce know where I am. Well, I have had a brave time. *Et ego in Arcadia*—though I don't believe Arcadia was a spot upon Tahiti. I have written another long narrative poem: the *Song of Rahero*. Privately, I think it good: but your ominous silence over the *Feast of Famine* leads me to fear we shall not be agreed. Is it possible I have wounded you in some way? I scarce like to dream that it is possible; and yet I know too well it may be so. If so, don't write, and you can pitch into me when we meet. I am, admittedly, as mild as London Stout now; and the Old Man Virulent much a creature of the past. My dear Colvin, I owe you and Fleeming Jenkin, the two older men who took the trouble, and knew how to make a friend of me, everything that I have or am: if I have behaved ill, just hold on and give me a chance, you shall have the slanging of me and I bet I shall prefer it to this silence.—Ever, my dear Colvin, your most affectionate R. L. S. 1889 ÆT. 38

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO MRS. SITWELL

This letter brought to friends in England the first news of the intended prolongation of the cruise among the remoter islands of the Pacific.

HONOLULU,
towards the end of March, 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Louis has improved so wonderfully in the delicious islands of the South Seas, that we think of trying yet one more voyage. We are a little uncertain as to how we shall go, whether in a missionary ship, or by hiring schooners from point to point, but the "unregenerate" islands we must see. I suppose we shall be off some time in June, which will fetch us back to England in another year's time. You could hardly believe it if you could see Louis now. He looks as well as he ever did in his life, and has had no sign of cough or hemorrhage (begging pardon of Nemesis) for many months. It seems a pity to return to England until his health is firmly re-established, and also a pity not to see all that we can see quite easily starting from this place: and which will be our only opportunity in life. Of course there is the usual risk from hostile natives, and the horrible sea, but a positive

1889 ÆT. 38 risk is so much more wholesome than a negative one, and it is all such joy to Louis and Lloyd. As for me, I hate the sea, and am afraid of it (though no one will believe that because in time of danger I do not make an outcry—nevertheless I *am* afraid of it, and it is not kind to me), but I love the tropic weather, and the wild people, and to see my two boys so happy. Mrs. Stevenson is going back to Scotland in May, as she does not like to be longer away from her old sister, who has been very ill. And besides, we do not feel justified in taking her to the sort of places we intend to visit. As for me, I can get comfort out of very rough surroundings for my people, I can work hard and enjoy it; I can even shoot pretty well, and though I "don't want to fight, by jingo if I must," why I can. I don't suppose there will be any occasion for that sort of thing—only in case.

I am not quite sure of the names, but I *think* our new cruise includes the Gilberts, the Fijis, and the Solomons. A letter might go from the Fijis; Louis will write the particulars, of which I am not sure. As for myself, I have had more cares than I was really fit for. To keep house on a yacht is no easy thing. When Louis and I broke loose from the ship and lived alone amongst the natives I got on very well. It was when I was deathly sea-sick, and the question was put to me by the cook, "what shall we have for the cabin dinner, what for to-morrow's breakfast, what for lunch? and what about the sailors' food? Please come and look at the biscuits, for the weevils have got into them, and show me how to make yeast that will rise of itself, and smell the pork which seems pretty high, and give me directions about making a pudding with molasses—and what is to be done about the bugs?"—

etc. etc. In the midst of heavy dangerous weather, when I was lying on the floor clutching a basin, down comes the mate with a cracked head, and I must needs cut off the hair matted with blood, wash and dress the wound, and administer restoratives. I do not like being "the lady of the yacht," but ashore! O, then I felt I was repaid for all. I wonder did any of my letters from beautiful Tautira ever come to hand, with the descriptions of our life with Louis's adopted brother Ori a Ori? Ori wrote to us, if no one else did, and I mean to give you a translation of his letter. It begins with our native names.

TAUTIRA, *26 Dec., 1888.*

To Teriitera (Louis) and Tapina Tutu (myself) and Aromaiterai (Lloyd) and Teiriha (Mrs. Stevenson) Salutation in the true Jesus.

I make you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife, Rui Tehini, also, and all of my household. When you embarked I felt a great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sails. When the ship started, I ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were on the open sea I cried out to you, "farewell Louis": and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying "Rui farewell." Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell; and when it was dark I said to myself, "if I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you, and to sleep amongst you, so that I might be able to come back to shore and to tell Rui Tehini, 'I have slept upon the ship of Teriitera.'" After

1889 ÆT. 38 that we passed that night in the impatience of grief. Towards eight o'clock I seemed to hear your voice, "Teriitera—Rui—here is the hour for putter and tiro" (cheese and syrup). I did not sleep that night, thinking continually of you, my very dear friend, until the morning: being then awake I went to see Tapina Tutu on her bed, and alas, she was not there. Afterwards I looked into your rooms; they did not please me as they used to do. I did not hear your voice crying, "hail Rui." I thought then that you had gone, and that you had left me. Rising up I went to the beach to see your ship, and I could not see it. I wept, then, till the night, telling myself continually, "Teriitera returns into his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief, so that I suffer for him, and weep for him." I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my dear Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at one table: there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

ORI A ORI; that is to say, RUI.

After reading this to me Louis has left in tears saying that he is not worth that such a letter should be written to him. We hope to so manage that we shall stop at Tahiti and see Rui once more. I tell myself that pleasant story when I wake in the night.

I find my head swimming so that I cannot write any more. I wish some rich Catholic would send a parlour organ to Père Bruno of Tautira. I am going to try and save money to do it myself, but he may die before I have enough. I feel ashamed to be sitting here when I think of that old man who cannot draw because of scrivener's paralysis, who has no one year in and year out to speak to but natives (our Rui is a Protestant not bigoted like the rest of them — but still a Protestant) and the only pastime he has is playing on an old broken parlour organ whose keys are mostly dumb. I know no more pathetic figure. Have you no rich Catholic friends who would send him an organ that he could play upon? Of course I am talking nonsense, and yet I know somewhere that person exists if only I knew the place. 1889 ÆT. 38

Our dearest love to you all. FANNY.]

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This letter shows the writer in her character of wise and anxious critic of her husband's work. The result, in the judgment of most of his friends, went far to justify her misgivings.

HONOLULU, *May 21st, 1889.*

BEST OF FRIENDS,—It was a joy inexpressible to get a word from you at last. Fortunately for our peace of mind, we were almost positive that your letters had been sent to the places we had already left. Still it was a bitter disappointment to get nothing from you when we arrived here. I wish you could have seen us both throwing over the immense package of letters searching for your handwriting. Now that we know you have been ill, please do let some one send us a line to our next address telling us how you are. What that next address may be we do not yet know, as our final movements are a little uncertain.

To begin with, a trading schooner, the *Equator*, will come along some time in the first part of June, lie outside the harbour here and signal to us. Within forty-eight hours we shall pack up our possessions, our barrel of sauerkraut, our barrel of salt onions, our bag of cocoanuts, our native garments, our tobacco, fish hooks, red combs, and Turkey red calicoes (all the latter for trading purposes), our hand organ, photograph and painting materials, and finally our magic lantern—all these upon a large whaleboat, and go out to the *Equator*. Lloyd, also, takes a fiddle, a guitar, a native instrument something like a banjo, called a taro-patch fiddle, and a lot of song books. We shall be carried first to one of the Gilberts, landing at Butaritari. The *Equator* is going about amongst the Gilbert group, and we have the right to keep her over when we like within reasonable limits. Finally she will leave us, and we shall have to take the chances of what happens next. We hope to see the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Fijis, Tonga and Samoa (also other islands that I do not remember), perhaps staying a little while in Sydney, and stopping on our way home to see our friends in Tahiti and the Marquesas. I am very much exercised by one thing. Louis has the most enchanting material that any one ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch Stevenson head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing, really) and the different peoples, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay origin or not. Also to compare the Protestant and Catholic missions, etc., and the whole thing to be impersonal, leaving out all he knows of the people themselves. And I believe there is no one living who has got so near to them, or who understands them as he does. Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the making of brothers with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us:—suppose Herman Melville had given us his theories as to the Polynesian language and the probable good or evil results of the missionary influence instead of *Omoo* and *Typee*, or Kinglake[1] instead of *Eothen*. Louis says it is a stern sense of duty that is at the bottom of it, which is more alarming than anything else. I am so sure that you will agree with me that I am going to ask you to throw the weight of your influence as heavily as possible in the scales with me. Please refer to the matter in the letters we shall receive at our first stopping place, otherwise Louis will spend a great deal of time in Sydney actually reading up other people's books on the Islands. What a thing it is to have a "man of genius" to deal with. It is like managing an overbred horse. Why with my own feeble hand I could write a book that the whole world would jump at. Please keep any letters of mine that contain any incidents of our wanderings. They are very exact as to facts, and Louis may, in this conscientious state of mind (indeed I am afraid he has), put nothing in his diary but statistics. Even if I thought it a desirable thing to write what he proposes, I should still think it impossible unless after we had lived and studied here some twenty years or more.

Now I am done with my complaining, and shall turn to

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[1] The writer has omitted something here.

1889 ÆT. 38 the pleasanter paths. Louis went to one of the other islands a couple of weeks ago, quite alone, got drenched with rain and surf, rode over mountain paths—five and a half hours one day—and came back none the worse for it. To-day he goes to Molokai, the leper island. He never has a sign of hemorrhage, the air cushion is a thing of the past, and altogether he is a new man. How he will do in the English climate again I do not know, but in these latitudes he is very nearly a well man, nothing seems to do him harm but overwork. That, of course, is sometimes difficult to prevent. Now, however, the *Master* is done, we have enough money to go upon and there is no need to work at all. I must stop. My dear love to you all.

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO LADY TAYLOR

HONOLULU, *June 19th, 1889.*

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—Our new home, the *Equator*, trading schooner, rides at the buoy to-night, and we are for sea shortly. All your folk of the Roost held us for phantoms and things of the night from our first appearance; but I do wish you would try to believe in our continued existence, as flesh and blood obscurely tossed in the Pacific, or walking coral shores, and in our affection, which is more constant than becomes the breasts of such absconders. My good health does not cease to be wonderful to myself: Fanny is better in these warm places; it is the very thing for Lloyd; and in the matter of interest, the spice of life, etc., words cannot depict what fun we have. Try to have a little more patience with the fugitives, and think of us now and again among the Gilberts, where we ought to be about the time when you receive this scrap. They make no great figure on the atlas, I confess; but you will see the name there, if you look—which I wish you would, and try to conceive us as still extant. We all send the kindest remembrances to all of you; please make one of the girls write us the news to the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, where we hope to bring up about the end of the year—or later. Do not forget yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO LADY TAYLOR

This letter contains the first announcement of the purchase of the Vailima estate (not yet so named). Sir Percy Shelley had died in the previous December.

APIA, SAMOA, *Jan. 20th, 1890.*

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I shall hope to see you in some months from now, when I come home—to break up my establishment—I know no diminutive of the word. Your daughters cast a spell upon me; they were always declaring I was a winged creature and would vanish into the uttermost isle; and they were right, and I have made my preparations. I am now the owner of an estate upon Upolu, some two or three miles behind and above Apia; three streams, two waterfalls, a great cliff, an ancient native fort, a view of the sea and lowlands, or (to be more precise) several views of them in various directions, are now mine. It would be affectation to omit a good many head of cattle; above all as it required much diplomacy to have them thrown in, for the gentleman who sold to me was staunch. Besides all this, there is a great deal

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more forest than I have any need for; or to be plain the whole estate is one impassable jungle, which must be cut down and through at considerable expense. Then the house has to be built; and then (as a climax) we may have to stand a siege in it in the next native war.

I do feel as if I was a coward and a traitor to desert my friends; only, my dear lady, you know what a miserable corrhyzal (is that how it is spelt?) creature I was at home: and here I have some real health, I can walk, I can ride, I can stand some exposure, I am up with the sun, I have a real enjoyment of the world and of myself; it would be hard to go back again to England and to bed; and I think it would be very silly. I am sure it would; and yet I feel shame, and I know I am not writing like myself. I wish you knew how much I admired you, and when I think of those I must leave, how early a place your name occupies. I have not had the pleasure to know you very long; and yet I feel as if my leaving England were a special treachery to you, and my leaving you a treachery to myself. I will only ask you to try to forgive me: for I am sure I will never quite forgive myself. Somebody might write to me in the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, to tell me if you can forgive. But you will do quite right if you cannot. Only let me come and see you when we do return, or it will be a lame home-coming.

My wife suffered a good deal in our last, somewhat arduous voyage; all our party indeed suffered except myself. Fanny is now better but she is still no very famous success in the way of health.

All the while I have been writing, I have had another matter in my eye; of which I scarce like to speak: You know of course that I am thinking of Sir Percy and his widow. The news has reached me in the shape of a newspaper cutting, I have no particulars. He had a sweet, original nature; I think I liked him better than ever I should have liked his father; I am sorry he was always a little afraid of me; if I had had more chance, he would have liked me too, we had so much in common, and I valued so much his fine soul, as honest as a dog's, and the romance of him, which was like a dog's too, and like a poet's at the same time. If he had not been Shelley's son, people would have thought more of him; and yet he was the better of the two, bar verses. 1890 ÆT. 39

Please tell my dear Ida and Una that we think much of them, as well as of your dear self, and believe me, in words which you once allowed me to use (and I was very much affected when you did so), your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO HENRY JAMES

The *Solution* is a short story of Mr. Henry James, first published in a periodical and reprinted in the collection called *The Lesson of the Master* (Macmillans).

UNION CLUB, SYDNEY, *February 19, 1890.*

HERE—in this excellent civilised, antipodal club smoking-room, I have just read the first part of your *Solution*. Dear Henry James, it is an exquisite art; do not be troubled by the shadows of your French competitors: not one, not de Maupassant, could have done a thing more clean and fine; dry in touch, but the atmosphere (as in a fine summer sunset) rich with colour and with perfume. I shall say no more; this note is De Solutione; except that I—

that we—are all your sincere friends and hope to shake you by the hand in June.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

signed, sealed and
delivered as his act
and deed
and very thought of very thought,
this nineteenth of February in the year of our
Lord one thousand eight hundred ninety
and nothing.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Written while he was still in a white heat of indignation on behalf of Father Damien. He was not aware that Dr. Hyde's letter had been a private one, not meant for publicity, and later came to think he might have struck as effectively on behalf of Damien, without striking so fiercely against Dr. Hyde (see below, Appendix, pp. 321–322). "Damon" was the Revd. F. Damon, a missionary in Hawaii.

UNION CLUB, SYDNEY, *March 5, 1890.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I understand the family keeps you somewhat informed. For myself I am in such a whirl of work and society, I can ill spare a moment. My health is excellent and has been here tried by abominable wet weather, and (what 's waur) dinners and lunches. As this is like to be our metropolis, I have tried to lay myself out to be sociable with an eye to yoursel'. Several niceish people have turned up: Fanny has an evening, but she is about at the end of the virtuous effort, and shrinks from the approach of any fellow creature.

Have you seen Hyde's (Dr. not Mr.) letter about Damien? That has been one of my concerns; I have an answer in the press; and have just written a difficult letter to Damon trying to prepare him for what (I fear) must be to him extremely painful. The answer is to come out as a pamphlet; of which I make of course a present to the publisher. I am not a cannibal, I would not eat the flesh of Dr. Hyde,—and it is conceivable it will make a noise in Honolulu. I have struck as hard as I knew how; nor do I think my answer can fail to do away (in the minds of all who see it) with the effect of Hyde's incredible and really villainous production. What a mercy I wasn't this man's *guest* in the *Morning Star!* I think it would have broke my heart. 1890 ÆT. 39

Time for me to go!—I remain, with love,

R. L. S.

TO MISS BOODLE

Exactly what tale of doings in the garret at Skerryvore had been related to Stevenson (in the character of Robin Lewison) by his correspondent (in the character of Miss Green) cannot well be gathered from this reply. But the letter is interesting as containing the only mention of certain schemes of romance afterwards abandoned.

UNION CLUB, SYDNEY, *1st September, 1890.*

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—I find you have been behaving very ill: *been* very ill, in fact. I find this hard to forgive; probably should not forgive it at all if Robin Lewison had not been sick himself and a wretched sick-room prisoner in this club for near a month. Well, the best and bravest sometimes fail. But who is Miss Green? Don't know her! I knew a lady of an exceedingly generous and perfervid nature—worthy to be suspected of Scotch blood for the perfervidness—equipped with a couple—perhaps a

1890 ÆT. 39 brace sounds better English—of perfervid eyes—with a certain graceful gaucherie of manner, almost like a child's, and that is at once the highest point of gaucherie and grace—a friend everybody I ever saw was delighted to see come and sorry to see go. Yes, I knew that lady, and can see her now. But who was Miss Green? There is something amiss here. Either the Robin Lewisons have been very shabbily treated, or—and this is the serious part of the affair—somebody unknown to me has been entrusted with the key of the Skerryvore garret. This may go as far as the Old Bailey, ma'am.

But why should I gird at you or anybody, when the truth is we are the most miserable sinners in the world? For we are not coming home, I dare not. Even coming to Sydney has made me quite ill, and back I go to Samoa, whither please address—Apia, Samoa—(and remember it is Sámó-a, a spondee to begin with, or Sahmoa, if you prefer that writing)—back I and my wife go to Samoa to live on our landed estate with four black labour boys in a kind of a sort of house, which Lloyd will describe to you. For he has gone to England: receive him like a favour and a piece of cake; he is our greeting to friends.

I paused here to put in the date on the first page. I am precious nearly through my fortieth year, thinks I to myself. Must be nearly as old as Miss Green, thinks I. O, come! I exclaimed, not as bad as that! Some lees of youth about the old remnant yet.

My amiable Miss Green, I beg you to give me news of your health, and if it may be good news. And when you shall have seen Lloyd, to tell me how his reports of the South Seas and our new circumstances strike such an awfully old person as yourself, and to tell me if you ever received a letter I sent you from Hawaii. I remember thinking—or remember remembering rather—it was (for me) quite a long respectable communication. Also, you might tell me if you got my war-whoop and scalping-knife assault on *le nommé Hyde.* 1890 ÆT. 39

I ought not to forget to say your tale fetched me (Miss Green) by its really vile probability. If we had met that man in Honolulu he would have done it, and Miss Green would have done it. Only, alas! there is no completed novel lying in the garret: would there were! It should be out to-morrow with the name to it, and relieve a kind of tightness in the money market much deplored in our immediate circle. To be sure (now I come to think of it) there are some seven chapters of *The Great North Road;* three, I think, of *Robin Run the Hedge*, given up when some nefarious person pre-empted the name; and either there—or somewhere else—likely New York—one chapter of *David Balfour*, and five or six of the *Memoirs of Henry Shovel.* That 's all. But Lloyd and I have one-half of *The Wrecker* in type, and a good part of *The Pearl Fisher* (O, a great and grisly tale that!) in MS. And I have a projected, entirely planned love-story—everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I 'm afraid—called *Cannonmills.* And I 've a vague, rosy haze before me—a love-story too, but not improper—called *The Rising Sun.* (It 's the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it 's a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him, and had befriended him; I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be

1890 ÆT. 39 pretty and true if I could do it.) Also I have my big book, *The South Seas*, always with me, and a sair handfu'—if I may be allowed to speak Scotch to Miss Green—a sair handfu' it is likely to be. All this literary gossip I bestow upon you *entre confrères*, Miss Green, which is little more than fair, Miss Green.

Allow me to remark that it is now half-past twelve o'clock of the living night; I should certainly be ashamed of myself, and you also; for this is no time of the night for Miss Green to be colloguing with a comparatively young gentleman of forty. So with all the kindest wishes to yourself, and all at Lostock, and all friends in Hants, or over the borders in Dorset, I bring my folly to an end. Please believe, even when I am silent, in my real affection; I need not say the same for Fanny, more obdurately silent, not less affectionate than I.—Your friend,

ROBERT—ROBIN LEWISON.

(Nearly had it wrong—force of habit.)

XI

LIFE IN SAMOA (VAILIMA LETTERS)

(JUNE, 1891–NOVEMBER, 1894)

XI

LIFE IN SAMOA (VAILIMA LETTERS)

(JUNE, 1891–NOVEMBER, 1894)

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

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The misgivings herein expressed about the imminence of a native war were not realised until two years later, and the plans of defence into which Stevenson here enters with characteristic gusto were not put to the test.

[VAILIMA, *June and July, 1891*.]

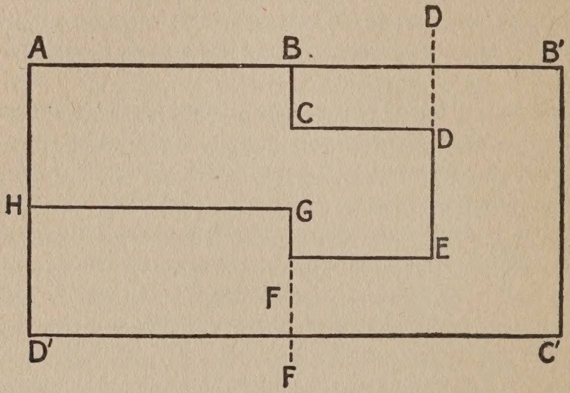
MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am so hideously in arrears that I know not where to begin. However, here I am a prisoner in my room, unfit for work, incapable of reading with interest, and trying to catch up a bit. We have a guest here: a welcome guest: my Sydney music master, whose health broke down, and who came with his remarkable simplicity, to ask a month's lodging. He is newly married, his wife in the family way: beastly time to fall sick. I have found, by good luck, a job for him here, which will pay some of his way: and in the meantime he is a pleasant guest, for he plays the flute with little sentiment but great perfection, and endears himself by his simplicity. To me, especially; I am so weary of finding people approach me with precaution, pick their words, flatter, and twitter; but the muttons of the good God are not at all afraid of the lion. They take him as he comes, and he does not bite—at least not hard. This makes us a party of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, at table; deftly waited on by

Mary Carter, a very nice Sydney girl, who served us at a boarding-house and has since come on—how long she will endure this exile is another story; and gauchely waited on by Faauma, the new left-handed wife of the famed Lafaele, a little creature in native dress of course and as beautiful as a bronze candlestick, so fine, clean and dainty in every limb; her arms and her little hips in particular masterpieces. The rest of the crew may be stated briefly, the great Henry Simelé, still to the front; King, of the yellow beard, rather a disappointment—I am inclined on this point to republican opinions: Ratke, a German cook, good—and Germanly bad, he don't make *my* kitchen; Paul, now working out his debts outdoor; Emma, a strange weird creature—I suspect (from her colour) a quarter white—widow of a white man, ugly, capable, a really good laundress; Java—yes, that is the name—they spell it Siava, but pronounce it, and explain it Java—her assistant, a creature I adore from her plain, wholesome, bread-and-butter beauty. An honest, almost ugly, bright, good-natured face; the rest (to my sense) merely exquisite. She comes steering into my room of a morning, like Mrs. Nickleby, with elaborate precaution; unlike her, noiseless. If I look up from my work, she is ready with an explosive smile. I generally don't, and wait to look at her as she stoops for the bellows, and trips tiptoe off again, a miracle of successful womanhood in every line. I am amused to find plain, healthy Java pass in my fancy so far before pretty young Faauma. I observed Lloyd the other day to say that Java must have been lovely "when she was young"; and I thought it an odd word, of a woman in the height of health, not yet touched with fat, though (to be just) a little slack of bust.

Our party you know: Fanny, Lloyd, my mother, Belle, and "the babe"—as we call him—Austin. We have now three instruments; Boehm flageolet, flute, and B♭ clarinet; and we expect in a few days our piano. This is a great pleasure to me; the band-mastering, the playing and all. As soon as I am done with this stage of a letter, I shall return, not being allowed to play, to bandmaster, being engaged in an attempt to arrange an air with effect for the three pipes. And I'll go now, by jabers.

July 3rd.—A long pause: occasioned, first by some days of hard work: next by a vile quinsey—if that be the way to spell it. But to-day I must write. For we have all kinds of larks on hand. The wars and rumours of wars begin to take consistency, insomuch that we have landed the weapons this morning, and inspected the premises with a view to defence. Of course it will come to nothing; but as in all stories of massacres, the one you don't prepare for is the one that comes off. All our natives think ill of the business; none of the whites do. According to our natives the demonstration threatened for to-day or to-morrow is one of vengeance on the whites—small wonder—and if that begins—where will it stop? Anyway I don't mean to go down for nothing, if I can help it; and to amuse you I will tell you our plans.

There is the house, upper story. Our weak point is of course the sides AB, AH; so we propose to place half our garrison in the space HGFD and half in the opposite corner, BB′CD. We shall communicate through the interior, there is a water-tank in the angle C, my mother and Austin are to go in the loft. The holding of only these two corners and deserting the corner C′ is for economy and communication, two doors being in the sides GF and CD; so that any one in the corner C′ could only communicate or be reinforced by exposure. Besides we are short of mattresses. Garrison: R. L. S., Lloyd, Fanny, King, Ratke—doubtful, he may go—Emma, Mary, Belle; weapons: eight revolvers and a shot-gun, and swords galore; but we 're pretty far gone when we come to the swords. It has been rather a lark arranging; but I find it a bore to write, and I doubt it will be cruel stale to read about, when all 's over and done, as it will be ere this goes, I fancy: far more ere it reaches you.



Date unknown.—Well, nothing as yet, though I don't swear by it yet. There has been a lot of trouble, and there still is a lot of doubt as to the future; and those who sit in the chief seats, who are all excellent, pleasant creatures, are not, perhaps, the most wise of mankind. They actually proposed to kidnap and deport Mataafa; a scheme which would have loosed the avalanche at once. But some human being interfered and choked off this pleasing scheme. You ask me in yours just received, what will become of us if it comes to war? Well, if it is a war of the old sort, nothing. It will mean a little bother, and a great deal of theft, and more amusement. But if it comes to the massacre lark, I can only answer with the Bell of Old Bow. You are to understand that, in my reading of the native character, every day that passes is a solid gain. They put in the time public speaking; so wear out their energy, develop points of difference and exacerbate internal ill-feeling. Consequently, I feel less apprehension of difficulty now, by about a hundredfold. All that I stick to, is that if war begins, there are ten chances to one we shall have it bad. The natives have been scurvily used by all the white powers without exception; and they labour under the belief, of which they can't be cured, that they defeated Germany. This makes an awkward complication.

I was extremely vexed to hear you were ill again. I hope you are better. 'T is a long time we have known each other now, to be sure. Well, well! you say you are sure to catch fever in the bush; so we do continually; but you are to conceive Samoa fever as the least formidable malady under heaven: implying only a day or so of slight headache and languor and ill humour, easily reduced by quinine or antipyrine. The hot fever I had was from over-exertion and blood poisoning, no doubt, and irritation of the bladder; it went of its own accord and with rest. I have had since a bad quinsey which knocked me rather useless for about a week, but I stuck to my work, with great difficulty and small success.

1891 ÆT. 41 *Date unknown.*—But it's fast day and July, and the rude inclement depth of winter, and the thermometer was 68 this morning and a few days ago it was 63, and we have all been perishing with cold. All still seems quiet. Your counterfeit presentments are all round us: the pastel over my bed, the Dew-Smith photograph over my door, and the "celebrity" on Fanny's table. My room is now done, and looks very gay, and chromatic with its blue walls and my coloured lines of books.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

[VAILIMA, *November, 1891.*]

DEAR CHARLES,—[After dealing with some matters of business] I believe that's a'. By this time, I suppose you will have heard from McClure, and the *Beach of Falesá* will be decided on for better for worse. The end of *The Wrecker* goes by this mail, an awfae relief. I am now free and can do what I please. What do I please? I kenna. I'll bide a wee. There's a child's history in the wind; and there's my grandfather's life begun; and there's a hist^{ry} of Samoa in the last four or five years begun—there's a kind of sense to this book; it may help the Samoans, it may help me, for I am bound on the altar here for anti-Germanism. Then there's *The Pearl Fisher* about a quarter done; and there's various short stories in various degrees of incompleteness. De'il there's plenty grist; but the mill's unco slaw! To-morrow or next day, when the mail's through, I'll attack one or other, or maybe something else. All these schemes begin to laugh at me, for the day's far through, and I believe the pen grows heavy. However, I believe *The Wrecker* is a good yarn of its poor sort, and it is certainly well nourished with facts; no realist can touch me there; for by this time I do begin to know something of life in the XIXth century, which no novelist either in France or England seems to know much of. You must have great larks over masonry. You 're away up in the ranks now and (according to works that I have read) doubtless design assassinations. But I am an outsider; and I have a certain liking for a light unto my path which would deter me from joining the rank and file of so vast and dim a confraternity. At your altitude it becomes (of course) amusing and perhaps useful. Yes, I remember the L. J. R.[1] and the constitution, and my homily on Liberty, and yours on Reverence, which was never written—so I never knew what reverence was. I remember I wanted to write Justice also; but I forget who had the billet. My dear papa was in a devil of a taking; and I had to go and lunch at Ferrier's in a strangely begrutten state, which was *infra dig.* for a homilist on liberty. It was about four, I suppose, that we met in the Lothian Road,—had we the price of two bitters between us? questionable!

Your bookseller (I have lost his letter, I mean the maid has, arranging my room, and so have to send by you) wrote me a letter about Old Bailey Papers. Gosh, I near swarfed; dam'd, man, I near had dee'd o't. It 's only yin or twa volumes I want; say 500 or 1000 pages of the stuff; and the worthy man (much doubting) proposed to bury me in volumes. Please allay his rage, and apologise that I have not written him direct. His note was civil and purposelike. And please send me a copy of Henley's *Book of Verses;* mine has disappeared. R. L. S.

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[1] See above, p. 16.

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TO MISS BOODLE

At the news that his correspondent was occupied teaching and entertaining a class of children in a Kilburn basement, Stevenson bethinks himself of helping her by writing an account of Samoa and Samoan life for children.

VAILIMA, *January 4th, 1892.*

MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—We were much pleased with your letter and the news of your employment. Admirable, your method. But will you not run dry of fairy stories? Please salute your pupils, and tell them that a long, lean, elderly man who lives right through on the under side of the world, so that down in your cellar you are nearer him than the people in the street, desires his compliments. This man lives in an island which is not very long, and extremely narrow. The sea beats round it very hard, so that it is difficult to get to shore. There is only one harbour where ships come, even that is very wild and dangerous; four ships of war were broken there a little while ago, and one of them is still lying on its side on a rock clean above water, where the sea threw it as you might throw your fiddle-bow on the table. All round the harbour the town is strung out, it is nothing but wooden houses, only there are some churches built of stone, not very large, but the people have never seen such fine buildings. Almost all the houses are of one story. Away at one end lives the king of the whole country. His palace has a thatched roof which stands upon posts; it has no walls, but when it blows and rains, they have Venetian blinds which they let down between the posts and make it very snug. There is no furniture, and the King and Queen and the courtiers sit and eat on the floor, which is of gravel: the lamp stands there too, and every now and then it is upset. These good folks wear nothing but a kilt about their waists, unless to go to church or for a dance, or the New Year, or some great occasion. The children play marbles all along the street; and though they are generally very jolly, yet they get awfully cross over their marbles, and cry and fight like boys and girls at home. Another amusement in country places is to shoot fish with a bow and arrow. All round the beach there is bright shallow water where fishes can be seen darting or lying in shoals. The child trots round the shore, and wherever he sees a fish, lets fly an arrow and misses, and then wades in after his arrow. It is great fun (I have tried it) for the child, and I never heard of it doing any harm to the fishes: so what could be more jolly? The road up to this lean man's house is uphill all the way and through forests; the forests are of great trees, not so much unlike the trees at home, only here and there are some very queer ones mixed with them, cocoanut palms, and great forest trees that are covered with blossom like red hawthorn, but not near so bright; and from all the trees thick creepers hang down like ropes, and nasty-looking weeds that they call orchids grow in the forks of the branches; and on the ground many prickly things are dotted which they call pine-apples: I suppose every one has eaten pine-apple drops.

On the way up to the lean man's house you pass a little village, all of houses like the king's house, so that as you ride through you can see everybody sitting at dinner, or if it be night, lying in their beds by lamplight; for all these people are terribly afraid of ghosts, and would not lie in the dark for any favour. After the village, there is only one more house, and that is the lean man's. For the people are not very many, and live all by the sea, and the whole inside of the island is desert woods and mountains. When the lean man goes into this forest, he is very much ashamed to say it, but he is always in a terrible fright. The wood is so great and empty and hot, and it is always filled with curious noises; birds cry like children and bark like dogs, and he can hear people laughing and felling trees; and the other day (when he was far in the woods) he heard a great sound like the biggest mill-wheel possible going with a kind of dot-and-carry-one movement like a dance. That was the noise of an earthquake away down below him in the bowels of the earth, and that is the same thing as to say away up towards you in your cellar in Kilburn. All these noises make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree, by which accidents people are sometimes killed. But at the time he thought it was a black boy.

Aha, say you, and what is a black boy? Well, there are here a lot of poor people who are brought here from distant islands to labour as slaves for the Germans. They are not at all like the king or his people, who are brown and very pretty; but these are black as negroes and as ugly as sin, poor souls, and in their own lands they live all the time at war and cook and eat men's flesh. The Germans thrash them with whips to make them work, and every now and then some run away into the Bush, as the forest is called, and build little sheds of leaves, and eat nuts and roots and fruit, and dwell there by themselves in the great desert. Sometimes they are bad and wild and come down in the villages and steal and kill; and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them. But it is very likely not true; and the most of them are only poor, stupid, trembling, half-starved, pitiful creatures like frightened dogs. Their life is all very well when the sun shines, as it does eight or nine months in the year. But it is very different the rest of the time. The wind rages here most violently. The great trees thrash about like whips; the air is filled with leaves and great branches flying about like birds; and the sound of the trees falling shakes the earth. It rains too as it never rains at home. You can hear a shower while it is yet half a mile away, hissing like a shower-bath in the forest; and when it comes to you, the water blinds your eyes, and the cold drenching takes your breath away as though some one had struck you. In that kind of weather it must be dreadful indeed to live in the woods, one man alone by himself. And you must know that, if the lean man feels afraid to be in the forest, the people of the island and the black boys are much more afraid than he. For they believe the woods to be quite filled with spirits; some are like pigs, and some are like flying things; but others (and these are thought the most dangerous) come in the shape of beautiful young women and young men, beautifully dressed in the island manner, with fine kilts and fine necklaces and crowns of scarlet seeds and flowers. Woe betide he or she who gets to speak with one of these! They will be charmed out of their wits, and come home again quite silly, and go mad and die. So that the poor black boy must be always trembling and looking about for the coming of the women-devils.

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Sometimes the women-devils go down out of the woods into the villages, and here is a tale the lean man heard last year. One of the islanders was sitting in his house and he had cooked fish. There came along the road two beautiful young women, dressed as I told you, who came into his house and asked for some of his fish. It is the fashion in the islands always to give what is asked, and never to ask folks' names. So the man gave them fish and talked to them in the island jesting way. And presently he asked one of the women for her red necklace, which is good manners and their way; he had given the fish, and he had a right to ask for something back. "I will give it you by and by," said the woman, and she and her companion went away; but he thought they were gone very suddenly, and the truth is they had vanished. The night was nearly come, when the man heard the voice of the woman crying that he should come to her and she would give the necklace. And he looked out, and behold she was standing calling him from the top of the sea, on which she stood as you might on the table. At that, fear came on the man; he fell on his knees and prayed, and the woman disappeared. It was known afterwards that this was once a woman indeed, but should have died a thousand years ago, and has lived all that while as a devil in the woods beside the spring of a river. Sau-mai-afe (Sow-my-affy) is her name, in case you want to write to her.—Ever your friend Tusitala (tale-writer),

alias ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THE REV. S. J. WHITMEE

In this letter the essential points of Stevenson's policy for Samoa are defined more clearly than anywhere else. His correspondent, an experienced missionary who had been absent from the islands and lately returned, and whom Stevenson describes as being of a nature essentially "childlike and candid," had been induced to support the idea of a one-man power as necessary for putting an end to the existing confusion, and to suggest the Chief Justice, Mr. Cedercrantz, as the person to wield such power. In the present letter and a subsequent conversation Stevenson was able to persuade his correspondent to abandon at least that part of his proposal which concerned the Chief Justice.

[VAILIMA], *Sunday. Better Day, Better Deed.*
April 24th, 1892.

Private and confidential.

DEAR MR. WHITMEE,—I have reflected long and fully on your paper, and at your kind request give you the benefit of my last thoughts.

I. I cannot bring myself to welcome your idea of one man. I fear we are too far away from any moderative influence; and suppose it to be true that the paper is bought, we should not even have a voice. Could we be sure to get a Gordon or a Lawrence, ah! very well. But in this out-of-the-way place, are these extreme experiments wise? Remember Baker; with much that he has done, I am in full sympathy; and the man, though wholly insincere, is a thousand miles from ill-meaning; and see to what excesses he was forced or led.

II. But I willingly admit the idea is possible with the right man, and this brings me with greater conviction to my next point. I cannot endorse, and I would rather beg of you to reconsider, your recommendation of the Chief

1892 ÆT. 41 Justice. I told you the man has always attracted me, yet as I have earnestly reconsidered the points against him, I find objection growing. . . .

But there is yet another argument I have to lay before you. We are both to write upon this subject. Many of our opinions coincide, and as I said the other day, on these we may reasonably suppose that we are not far wrong. Now here is a point on which we shall directly counter. No doubt but this will lessen the combined weight of our arguments where they coincide. And to avoid this effect, it might seem worth while to you to modify or cancel the last paragraph of your article.

III. But I now approach what seems to me by far the most important. White man here, white man there, Samoa is to stand or fall (bar actual seizure) on the Samoan question. And upon this my mind is now really made up. I do not believe in Laupepa alone; I do not believe in Mataafa alone. I know that their conjunction implies peace; I am persuaded that their separation means either war or paralysis. It is the result of the past, which we cannot change, but which we must accept and use or suffer by. I have now made up my mind to do all that I may be able — little as it is — to effect a reconciliation between these two men Laupepa and Mataafa; persuaded as I am that there is the one door of hope. And it is my intention before long to approach both in this sense. Now, from the course of our interview, I was pleased to see that you were, if not equally strong with myself, at least inclined to much the same opinion. And in a carefully weighed paper, such as that you read me, I own I should be pleased to have this cardinal matter touched upon. At home it is not, it cannot be, understood: Mataafa is thought a rebel;

the Germans profit by the thought to pursue their career of vengeance for Fagalii; the two men are perpetually offered as alternatives—they are no such thing—they are complementary; authority, supposing them to survive, will be impossible without both. They were once friends, fools and meddlers set them at odds, they must be friends again or have so much wisdom and public virtue as to pretend a friendship. There is my policy for Samoa. And I wish you would at least touch upon that point, I care not how; because, although I am far from supposing you feel it to be necessary in the same sense or to the same degree as I do, I am well aware that no man knows Samoa but must see its huge advantages. Excuse this long and tedious lecture, which I see I have to mark private and confidential, or I might get into deep water, and believe me, yours very truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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TO CHARLES BAXTER

The maps herein bespoken do not adorn the original edition of *Catriona*, but were executed by Messrs. Bartholomew for the Edinburgh edition in a manner that would have rejoiced the writer's heart.

[VAILIMA], *April 28, 1892.*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have just written the dedication of *David Balfour* to you, and haste to put a job in your hands. This is a map of the environs of Edinburgh *circa* 1750. It must contain Hope Park, Hunter's Bog, Calton Hill, the Mouter Hill, Lang Dykes, Nor' Loch, West Kirk, Village of Dean, pass down the water to Stockbridge, Silver Mills, the two mill lakes there, with a wood on the south side of the south one which I saw marked on a plan in the British Museum, Broughton, Picardy, Leith

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Walk, Leith, Pilrig, Lochend, Figgate Whins. And I would like a piece in a corner, giving for the same period Figgate Whins, Musselburgh, Inveresk, Prestonpans, battlefield of Gladsmuir, Cockenzie, Gullane—which I spell Gillane—Fidra, Dirleton, North Berwick Law, Whitekirk, Tantallon Castle and Castleton, Scougal and Auldhame, the Bass, the Glenteithy rocks, Satan's Bush, Wildfire rocks, and, if possible, the May. If need were, I would not stick at two maps. If there is but one, say, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in the Lothians.* If two, call the first *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures about the city of Edinburgh,* and the *second*, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in East Lothian.* I suppose there must be a map-maker of some taste in Edinburgh; I wish few other names in, but what I have given, as far as possible. As soon as may be I will let you have the text, when you might even find some amusement in seeing that the maps fill the bill. If your map-maker be a poor creature, plainness is best; if he were a fellow of some genuine go, he might give it a little of the bird's-eye quality. I leave this to your good taste. If I have time I will copy the dedication to go herewith; I am pleased with it. The first map (suppose we take two), would go in at the beginning, the second at Chapter XI. The topography is very much worked into the story, and I have alluded in the dedication to our common fancy for exploring Auld Reekie.

The list of books came duly, for which many thanks. I am plunged to the nostrils in various business.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO MISS BOODLE

Samoa and the Samoans for children, continued after an eight months' pause.

VAILIMA PLANTATION, SAMOAN ISLANDS,
August 14th, 1892.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — The lean man is exceedingly ashamed of himself, and offers his apologies to the little girls in the cellar just above. If they will be so good as to knock three times upon the floor, he will hear it on the other side of his floor, and will understand that he is forgiven. I believe I got you and the children—or rather left you and the children — still on the road to the lean man's house. When you get up there a great part of the forest has been cleared away. It comes back again pretty quick, though not quite so high ; but everywhere, except where the weeders have been kept busy, young trees have sprouted up, and the cattle and the horses cannot be seen as they feed. In this clearing there are two or three houses scattered about, and between the two biggest I think the little girls in the cellar would first notice a sort of thing like a gridiron on legs made of logs and wood. Sometimes it has a flag flying on it made of rags of old clothes. It is a fort (so I am told) built by the person here who would be much the most interesting to the girls in the cellar. This is a young gentleman of eleven years of age answering to the name of Austin. It was after reading a book about the Red Indians that he thought it more prudent to create this place of strength. As the Red Indians are in North America, and this fort seems to me a very useless kind of building, I am anxious to hope that the two may never be brought together. When Austin is not engaged in building forts, nor on his lessons, which are just as annoying to him as other children's lessons are to them, he walks sometimes in the bush, and if anybody is with him, talks all the time. When he is alone I don't think he says anything, and I dare say he feels very lonely and frightened, just as the lean man does, at the queer noises and the endless lines of the trees. He finds the strangest kinds of seeds, some of them bright coloured like lollipops, or really like precious stones; some of them in odd cases like tobacco-pouches. He finds and collects all kinds of little shells with which the whole ground is scattered, and which, though they are the shells of land animals like our snails, are nearly of as many shapes and colours as the shells on our sea-beaches. In the streams that come running down out of the mountains, and which are all as clear and bright as mirror glass, he sees eels and little bright fish that sometimes jump together out of the surface of the brook in a little knot of silver, and fresh-water prawns which lie close under the stones, and can be seen looking up at him with eyes of the colour of a jewel. He sees all kinds of beautiful birds, some of them blue and white, some of them blue and white and red, and some of them coloured like our pigeons at home, and these last the little girls in the cellar may like to know live almost entirely on nutmegs as they fall ripe off the trees. Another little bird he may sometimes see, as the lean man saw him only this morning, a little fellow not so big as a man's hand, exquisitely neat, of a pretty bronze black like ladies' shoes, and who sticks up behind him (much as a peacock does) his little tail shaped and fluted like a scallop shell.

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Here are a lot of curious and interesting things that Austin sees round him every day; and when I was a child at home in the old country I used to play and pretend to myself that I saw things of the same kind. That the rooms were full of orange and nutmeg trees, and the cold town gardens outside the windows were alive with parrots and with lions. What do the little girls in the cellar think that Austin does? He makes believe just the other way: he pretends that the strange great trees with their broad leaves and slab-sided roots are European oaks; and the places on the road up (where you and I and the little girls in the cellar have already gone) he calls by old-fashioned, far-away European names, just as if you were to call the cellar stair and the corner of the next street—if you could only manage to pronounce the names—Upolu and Savaii. And so it is with all of us, with Austin and the lean man and the little girls in the cellar; wherever we are it is but a stage on the way to somewhere else, and whatever we do, however well we do it, it is only a preparation to do something else that shall be different.

But you must not suppose that Austin does nothing but build forts and walk among the woods and swim in the rivers. On the contrary, he is sometimes a very busy and useful fellow; and I think the little girls in the cellar would have admired him very nearly as much as he admired himself if they had seen him setting off on horseback with his hand on his hip and his pockets full of letters and orders, at the head of quite a procession of huge white cart-horses with pack-saddles, and big brown native men with nothing on but gaudy kilts. Mighty well he managed all his commissions; and those who saw him ordering and eating his single-handed luncheon in the queer little Chinese restaurant

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on the beach declared he looked as if the place, and the town, and the whole archipelago belonged to him. But I am not going to let you suppose that this great gentleman at the head of all his horses and his men, like the King of France in the old rhyme, would be thought much of a dandy on the streets of London. On the contrary, if he could be seen there with his dirty white cap, and his faded purple shirt, and his little brown breeks that do not reach his knees, and the bare shanks below, and the bare feet stuck in the stirrup leathers, for he is not quite long enough to reach the irons, I am afraid the little boys and girls in your part of the town might feel very much inclined to give him a penny in charity. So you see that a very, very big man in one place might seem very small potatoes in another, just as the king's palace here (of which I told you in my last) would be thought rather a poor place of residence by a Surrey gipsy. And if you come to that, even the lean man himself, who is no end of an important person, if he were picked up from the chair where he is now sitting, and slung down, feet foremost, in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, would probably have to escape into the nearest shop, or take the consequences of being mobbed. And the ladies of his family, who are very pretty ladies, and think themselves uncommonly well-dressed for Samoa, would (if the same thing were done to them) be extremely glad to get into a cab.

I write to you by the hands of another, because I am threatened again with scrivener's cramp. My health is beyond reproach; I wish I could say as much for my wife's, which is far from the thing. Give us some news of yours, and even when none of us write, do not suppose for a moment that we are forgetful of our old gamekeeper. Our prettiest walk, an alley of really beautiful green sward which leads through Fanny's garden to the river and the bridge and the beginning of the high woods on the mountain-side, where the Tapu a fafine (or spirit of the land) has her dwelling, and the work-boys fear to go alone, is called by a name that I think our gamekeeper has heard before — Adelaide Road. 1892 ÆT. 41

With much love from all of us to yourself, and all good wishes for your future, and the future of the children in the cellar, believe me your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THE CHILDREN IN THE CELLAR

This time the children in the Kilburn cellar are addressed direct, with only a brief word at the end to their instructress.

VAILIMA PLANTATION, SAMOAN ISLANDS,
September 4th, 1892.

DEAR CHILDREN IN THE CELLAR,—I told you before something of the black boys who come here for work on the plantations, and some of whom run away and live a wild life in the forests of the islands. Now I want to tell you of one who lived in the house of the lean man. Like the rest of them here, he is a little fellow, and when he goes about in old, battered, cheap European clothes looks very small and shabby. When first he came he was as lean as a tobacco-pipe, and his smile (like that of almost all the others) was the sort that makes you half wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry. However, the boys in the kitchen took him in hand and fed him up. They would set him down alone to table and wait upon him till he had his fill, which was a good long time to wait; and the first

1892 ÆT. 41 thing we noticed was that his little stomach began to stick out like a pigeon's breast; and then the food got a little wider spread and he started little calves to his legs; and last of all he began to get quite saucy and impudent, so that we could know what sort of a fellow he really was when he was no longer afraid of being thrashed. He is really what you ought to call a young man, though I suppose nobody in the whole wide world has any idea of his age; and, as far as his behaviour goes, you can only think of him as a big little child with a good deal of sense. When Austin built his fort against the Indians, Arick (for that is the black boy's name) liked nothing so much as to help him. And this is very funny, when you think that of all the dangerous savages in this island Arick is one of the most dangerous. The other day, besides, he made Austin a musical instrument of the sort they use in his own country, a harp with only one string. He took a stick about three feet long, and perhaps four inches round. The under side he hollowed out in a deep trench to serve as sounding box; the two ends of the upper side he made to curve upward like the ends of a canoe, and between these he stretched the single string. He plays upon it with a match or a little piece of stick, and sings to it songs of his own country, of which no person here can understand a single word, and which are very likely all about fighting with his enemies in battle, and killing them, and I am sorry to say cooking them in a ground oven and eating them for supper when the fight is over.

For Arick is really what you might call a savage, though a savage is a very different person in reality, and a very much nicer, from what he is made to appear in little books. He is the sort of person that everybody smiles to, or makes faces at, or gives a smack to as he goes by; the sort of person that all the girls on the plantation give the best seat to, and help first, and love to decorate with flowers and ribbons, and yet all the while are laughing at him; the sort of person who likes best to play with Austin, and whom Austin perhaps (when he is allowed) likes best to play with. He is all grins and giggles, and little steps out of dances, and little droll ways, to attract people's attention and set them laughing. And yet when you come to look at him closer, you will find that his body is all covered with scars. This was when he was a child. There was a war, as is the way in these wild islands, between his village and the next, much as if there were war in London between one street and another; and all the children ran about playing in the middle of the trouble, and I dare say took no more notice of the war than you children in London do of a general election. But sometimes, at general elections, English children may get run over by processions in the street; and it chanced that as little Arick was running about in the bush, and very busy about his playing, he ran into the midst of the warriors on the other side. These speared him with a poisoned spear; and his own people, when they had found him lying for dead, and in order to cure him of the poison, cut him up with knives that were probably made of fish-bones.

This is a very savage piece of child-life, and Arick, for all his good-nature, is still a very savage person. I have told you how the black boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live behind alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens of food, but for the most part living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth. I do not think there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished. They can never hope to see again their own land or their own people—indeed, I do not know what they can hope, but just to find enough yams every day to keep them from starvation. And in the wet season of the year, which is our summer and your winter, and the rain falls day after day far harder and louder than the loudest thunder-plump that ever fell in England, and the noon is sometimes so dark that the lean man is glad to light his lamp to write by, I can think of nothing so dreary as the state of these poor runaway slaves in the houseless bush. You are to remember, besides, that the people of this island hate and fear them because they are cannibals, sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking black boy in the neighbourhood. Well, now, Arick is of their own race and language, only he is a little more lucky because he has not run away; and how do you think that he proposed to help them? He asked if he might not have a gun. "What do you want with a gun, Arick?" was asked. And he said quite simply, and with his nice good-natured smile, that if he had a gun he would go up into the high bush and shoot black boys as men shoot pigeons. He said nothing about eating them, nor do I think he really meant to. I think all he wanted was to clear the property of vermin as gamekeepers at home kill weasels, or housewives mice.

The other day he was sent down on an errand to the German Firm where many of the black boys live. It was very late when he came home on a bright moonlight night. He had a white bandage round his head, his eyes shone, and he could scarcely speak for excitement. It seems some of the black boys who were his enemies at home had attacked him, and one with a knife. By his own account he had fought very well, but the odds were heavy; the man with the knife had cut him both in the head and back, he had been struck down, and if some of the black boys of his own side had not come to the rescue, he must certainly have been killed. I am sure no Christmas-box could make any of you children so happy as this fight made Arick. A great part of the next day he neglected his work to play upon the one-stringed harp and sing songs about his great victory. And to-day, when he is gone upon his holiday, he has announced that he is going back to the German Firm to have another battle and another triumph. I do not think he will go all the same, or I should be more uneasy, for I do not want to have my Arick killed; and there is no doubt that if he begins to fight again, he will be likely to go on with it very far. For I have seen him once when he saw, or thought he saw, an enemy. It was one of our dreadful days of rain, the sound of it like a great waterfall or like a tempest of wind blowing in the forest; and there came to our door two runaway black boys seeking work. In such weather as that my enemy's dog (as Shakespeare says) should have had a right to shelter. But when Arick saw these two poor rogues coming with their empty bellies and drenched clothes, and one of them with a stolen cutlass in his hand, through that world of falling water, he had no thought of pity in his heart. Crouching behind one of the pillars of the verandah, which he held in his two hands, his mouth drew back into a strange sort of smile, his eyes grew bigger and big-

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ger, and his whole face was just like the one word Murder in big capitals.

Now I have told you a great deal too much about poor Arick's savage nature, and now I must tell you about a great amusement he had the other day. There came an English ship of war in the harbour, and the officers very good naturedly gave an entertainment of songs and dances and a magic-lantern, to which Arick and Austin were allowed to go. At the door of the hall there were crowds of black boys waiting and trying to peep in, the way children at home lie about and peep under the tent of a circus; and you may be sure Arick was a very proud person when he passed them all by and entered the hall with his ticket. I wish I knew what he thought of the whole performance; but the housekeeper of the lean man, who sat just in front of him, tells me what seemed to startle him the most. The first thing was when two of the officers came out with blackened faces like Christy minstrel boys and began to dance. Arick was sure that they were really black and his own people, and he was wonderfully surprised to see them dance this new European style of dance. But the great affair was the magic-lantern. The hall was made quite dark, which was very little to Arick's taste. He sat there behind the housekeeper, nothing to be seen of him but eyes and teeth, and his heart beating finely in his little scarred breast. And presently there came out on the white sheet that great bright eye of light that I am sure all you children must have often seen. It was quite new to Arick, he had no idea what would happen next; and in his fear and excitement, he laid hold with his little slim black fingers like a bird's claws on the neck of the housekeeper in front of him. All through the rest of the show, as one picture followed another on the white sheet, he sat there gasping and clutching at the housekeeper's neck, and goodness knows whether he were more pleased or frightened. Doubtless it was a very fine thing to see all these bright pictures coming out and dying away again one after another; but doubtless it was rather alarming also, for how was it done? And at last, when there appeared upon the screen the head of a black woman (as it might be his own mother or sister), and the black woman of a sudden began to roll her eyes, the fear or the excitement, whichever it was, wrung out of him a loud shuddering sob. And I think we all ought to admire his courage when, after an evening spent in looking on at such wonderful miracles, he and Austin set out alone through the forest to the lean man's house. It was late at night and pitch dark when some of the party overtook the little white boy and the big black boy marching among the trees with their lantern. I have told you the wood has an ill name, and all the people of the island believe it to be full of devils; but even if you do not believe in the devils, it is a pretty dreadful place to walk in by the moving light of a lantern, with nothing about you but a curious whirl of shadows and the black night above and beyond. But Arick kept his courage up, and I dare say Austin's too, with a perpetual chatter, so that the people coming after heard his voice long before they saw the shining of the lantern.

My dear Miss Boodle,—will I be asking too much that you should send me back my letters to the Children, or copies, if you prefer; I have an idea that they may perhaps help in time to make up a book on the South Seas for children. I have addressed the Cellar so long this time that you must take this note for yourself and excuse, yours most sincerely, R. L. STEVENSON.

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TO MISS TAYLOR

Lady Taylor had died soon after the settlement of the Stevenson family at Vailima. The second paragraph refers to a test which had been set before an expert in the reading of character by handwriting.

VAILIMA, SAMOAN ISLANDS, *October 7th, 1892.*

MY DEAR IDA,—I feel very much the implied reproof in yours just received; but I assure you there is no fear of our forgetting either Una or yourself, or your dear mother, who was one of the women I have most admired and loved in the whole of my way through life. The truth is Fanny writes to nobody and that I am on the whole rather overworked. I compose lots of letters to lots of unforgotten friends, but when it comes to taking the pen between my fingers there are many impediments. Hence it comes that I am now writing to you by an amanuensis, at which I know you will be very angry. Well, it was Hobson's choice. A little while ago I had very bad threatenings of scrivener's cramp; and if Belle (Fanny's daughter, of whom you remember to have heard) had not taken up the pen for my correspondence, I doubt you would never have heard from me again except in the way of books. I wish you and Una would be so good as to write to us now and then even without encouragement. An unsolicited letter would be almost certain (sooner or later, depending on the activity of the conscience) to produce some sort of an apology for an answer.

All this upon one condition: that you send me your friend's description of my looks, age and character. The character of my work I am not so careful about. But did you ever hear of anything so tantalising as for you to tell me the story and not send me your notes? I expect it was a device to extract an answer; and, as you see, it has succeeded. Let me suggest (if your friend be handy) that the present letter would be a very delicate test. It is in one person's handwriting, it expresses the ideas of another, of the writer herself you know nothing. I should be very curious to know what the sibyl will make of such a problem.

If you carry out your design of settling in London you must be sure and let us have the new address. I swear we shall write some time—and if the interval be long you must just take it on your own head for prophesying horrors. You remember how you always said we were but an encampment of Bedouins, and that you would awake some morning to find us fled for ever. Nothing unsettled me more than these ill-judged remarks. I was doing my best to be a sedentary semi-respectable man in a suburban villa; and you were always shaking your head at me and assuring me (what I knew to be partly true) that it was all a farce. Even here, when I have sunk practically all that I possess, and have good health and my fill of congenial fighting, and could not possibly get away if I wanted ever so—even here and now the recollection of these infidel prophecies rings in my ears like an invitation to the sea. *Tu l'as voulu!*

I know you want some of our news, and it is all so far away that I know not when to begin. We have a big house and we are building another—pray God that we can pay for it. I am just reminded that we have no less than eight several places of habitation in this place, which was a piece of uncleared forest some three years ago. I think there are on my pay rolls at the present moment

1892 ÆT. 41 thirteen human souls, not counting two washerwomen who come and go. In addition to this I am at daggers drawn with the Government, have had my correspondence stopped and opened by the Chief Justice—it was correspondence with the so-called Rebel King,—and have had boys examined and threatened with deportation to betray the secrets of my relations with the same person. In addition to this I might direct attention to those trifling exercises of the fancy, my literary works, and I hope you won't think that I am likely to suffer from ennui. Nor is Fanny any less active. Ill or well, rain or shine, a little blue indefatigable figure is to be observed howking about certain patches of garden. She comes in heated and bemired up to the eyebrows, late for every meal. She has reached a sort of tragic placidity. Whenever she plants anything new the boys weed it up. Whenever she tries to keep anything for seed the house-boys throw it away. And she has reached that pitch of a kind of noble dejection that she would almost say she did not mind. Anyway, her cabbages have succeeded. Talolo (our native cook, and a very good one too) likened them the other day to the head of a German; and even this hyperbolical image was grudging. I remember all the trouble you had with servants at the Roost. The most of them were nothing to the trances that we have to go through here at times, when I have to hold a bed of justice, and take evidence which is never twice the same, and decide, practically blindfold, and after I have decided have the accuser take back the accusation in block and beg for mercy for the culprit. Conceive the annoyance of all this when you are very fond of both.—Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

This correspondent had lately been on a tour in Sweden.

[VAILIMA], *December 28th, 1892.*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Your really decent letter to hand. And here I am answering it, to the merry note of the carpenter's hammer, in an upper room of the New House. This upper floor is almost done now, but the Grrrrrreat 'All below is still unlined; it is all to be varnished redwood. I paid a big figure but do not repent; the trouble has been so minimised, the work has been so workmanlike, and all the parties have been so obliging. What a pity when you met the Buried Majesty of Sweden—the sovereign of my Cedercrantz—you did not breathe in his ear a word of Samoa!

O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
Conceive how his plump carcase pants
To leave the spot he now is tree'd in,
And skip with all the dibbs to Sweden.

O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
The lowly plea I now advantz;
Remove this man of light and leadin'
From us to more congenial Sweden.

This kind of thing might be kept up a Lapland night. "Let us bury the great joke"—Shade of Tennyson, forgive!

I am glad to say, you can scarce receive the second bill for the house until next mail, which gives more room to turn round in. Yes, my rate of expenditure is hellish. It

1893 ÆT. 42 is funny, it crept up and up; and when we sat upon one vent another exploded. Lloyd and I grew grey over the monthly returns; but every damned month, there is a new extra. However, we always hope the next will prove less recalcitrant; in which faith we advance trembling.

The desiderated advertisement, I think I have told you, was mighty near supplied: that is, if deportation would suit your view: the ship was actually sought to be hired. Yes, it would have been an advertisement, and rather a lark, and yet a blooming nuisance. For my part, I shall try to do without.

No one has thought fit to send me *Atalanta*[1]; and I have no proof at all of *D. Balfour*, which is far more serious. How about the *D. B.* map? As soon as there is a proof it were well I should see it to accord the text thereto — or t'other way about if needs must. Remember I had to go much on memory in writing that work. Did you observe the dedication? and how did you like it? If it don't suit you, I am to try my hand again.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Telling how the projected tale, *The Pearl Fisher*, had been cut down and in its new form was to be called *The Schooner Farallone* (afterwards changed to *The Ebb Tide*).

[VAILIMA, *February, 1893*.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have had the influenza, as I believe you know: this has been followed by two goes of my old friend Bloodie Jacke, and I have had fefe—the island complaint—for the second time in two months. All this, and the fact that both my womenkind require to see a doctor: and some wish to see Lord Jersey before he goes home: all send me off on a month's holiday to Sydney. I may get my mail: or I may not: depends on freight, weather, and the captain's good-nature—he is one of those who most religiously fear Apia harbour: it is quite a superstition with American captains. (Odd note: American sailors, who make British hair grey by the way they carry canvas, appear to be actually *more* nervous when it comes to coast and harbour work.) This is the only holiday I have had for more than 2 years; I dare say it will be as long again before I take another. And I am going to spend a lot of money. Ahem!

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[1] The magazine in which *Catriona* first appeared in this country, under the title *David Balfour*.

On the other hand, you can prepare to dispose of the serial rights of *The Schooner Farallone:* a most grim and gloomy tale. It will run to something between *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Treasure Island.* I will not commit myself beyond this, but I anticipate from 65 to 70,000 words, could almost pledge myself not shorter than 65,000, but won't. The tale can be sent as soon as you have made arrangements; I hope to finish it in a month; six weeks, bar the worst accidents, for certain. I should say this is the butt end of what was once *The Pearl Fisher.* There is a peculiarity about this tale in its new form: it ends with a conversion! We have been tempted rather to call it *The Schooner Farallone: a tract by R. L. S. and L. O.* It would make a boss tract; the three main characters—and there are only four—are barats, insurance frauds, thieves and would-be murderers; so the company 's good. Devil a woman there, by good luck; so it 's "pure." 'T is a most—what 's the expression?—unconventional work.

R. L. S

TO JAMES S. STEVENSON

This is addressed to a very remote cousin in quest of information about the origins of the family.

VAILIMA, SAMOA, *June 19th, 1893.*

DEAR MR. STEVENSON, — I am reminded by coming across some record of relations between my grandfather, Robert Stevenson, C.E., Edinburgh, and Robert Stevenson, Esq., Secretary to the Royal Exchange, Glasgow, and I presume a son of Hugh Stevenson who died in Tobago 16th April 1774, that I have not yet consulted my cousins in Glasgow.

I am engaged in writing a Life of my grandfather, my uncle Alan, and my father, Thomas, and I find almost inconceivable difficulty in placing and understanding their (and my) descent.

Might I ask if you have any material to go upon? The smallest note would be like found gold to me; and an old letter invaluable.

I have not got beyond James Stevenson and Jean Keir his spouse, to whom Robert the First (?) was born in 1675. Could you get me further back? Have you any old notes of the trouble in the West Indian business which took Hugh and Alan to their deaths? How had they acquired so considerable a business at an age so early? You see how the queries pour from me; but I will ask nothing more in words. Suffice it to say that any information, however insignificant, as to our common forebears, will be very gratefully received. In case you should have any original documents, it would be better to have copies sent to me in this outlandish place, for the expense of which I will account to you as soon as you let me know the amount, and it will be wise to register your letter. —Believe me, in the old, honoured Scottish phrase, your affectionate cousin, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. 1893 ÆT. 42

TO JAMES S. STEVENSON

VAILIMA PLANTATION, ISLAND OF UPOLU,
SAMOA, *Sept. 4th, 1893.*

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I thank you cordially for your kinsmanlike reply to my appeal. Already the notes from the family Bible have spared me one blunder, which I had from some notes in my grandfather's own hand; and now, like the daughters of the horseleech, my voice is raised again to put you to more trouble. "Nether Carsewell, Neilston," I read. My knowledge of Scotland is fairly wide, but it does not include Neilston.

However, I find by the (original) Statistical Account, it is a parish in Renfrew. Do you know anything of it? Have you identified Nether Carsewell? Have the Neilston parish registers been searched? I see whole vistas of questions arising, and here am I in Samoa!

I shall write by this mail to my lawyer to have the records searched, and to my mother to go and inquire in the parish itself. But perhaps you may have some further information, and if so, I should be glad of it. If you have not, pray do not trouble to answer. As to your father's blunder of "Stevenson of Cauldwell," it is now explained: *Carse*well may have been confounded with *Cauldwell:* and it seems likely our man may have been a tenant or retainer of Mure of Cauldwell, a very ancient and honourable family, who seems to have been at least a neighbouring laird to the parish of Neilston. I was just about to close this, when I observed again your obliging offer of service, and I take you promptly at your word.

Do you think that you or your son could find a day to visit Neilston and try to identify Nether Carsewell, find what size of a farm it is, to whom it belonged, etc.? I shall be very much obliged. I am pleased indeed to learn some of my books have given pleasure to your family; and with all good wishes, I remain, your affectionate cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The registers I shall have seen to, through my lawyer.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Finished on the way to Honolulu for a health change which turned out unfortunate. With the help of Mr. J. H. Stevenson and other correspondents he had now been able (regretfully giving up the possibility of a Macgregor lineage) to identify his forebears as having about 1670 been tenant farmers at Nether Carsewell in Renfrewshire. The German government at home had taken his *Footnote to History* much less kindly than his German neighbours on the spot, and the Tauchnitz edition had been confiscated and destroyed and its publisher fined.

[VAILIMA, AND S.S. "MARIPOSA,"
September, 1893.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Here is a job for you. It appears that about 1665, or earlier, James Stevenson $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{in}\\\text{of}\end{matrix}\right\}$ Nether-Carsewell, parish of Neilston, flourished. Will you kindly send an able-bodied reader to compulse the parish registers of Neilston, if they exist or go back as far? Also could any trace be found through Nether-Carsewell? I expect it to have belonged to Mure of Cauldwell. If this be so, might not the Cauldwell charter chest contain some references to their Stevenson tenantry? Perpend upon it. But clap me on the judicious, able-bodied reader on the spot. Can I really have found the tap-root of my illustrious ancestry at last? Souls of my fathers! What a giggle-iggle-orious moment! I have drawn on you for £400. Also I have written to Tauchnitz announcing I should bear one-half part of his fines and expenses, amounting to £62, 10*s*. The £400 includes £160 which I have laid out here in land. Vanu Manutagi—the vale of crying birds (the wild dove)—is now mine: it was Fanny's wish and she is to buy it from me when she has made that much money.

Will you please order from me through your bookseller the *Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest—if that be her name—and the original of Cook's voyages lately published? Also, I see announced a map of the Great North Road: you might see what it is like: if it is highly detailed, or has any posting information, I should like it.

This is being finished on board the *Mariposa* going north. I am making the run to Honolulu and back for health's sake. No inclination to write more.—As ever,

R. L. S.

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TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This was the last letter I received from my friend. On the morning of his death the following month he spoke of being behindhand with his December letter and of his intention to write it next day.

[VAILIMA, *November, 1894.*]

DEAR COLVIN,—Saturday there was a ball to the ship, and on Sunday Gurr had a child to be baptised. Belle was to be godmother and had to be got down; which was impossible, as the jester Euclid says. However, we had four men of very different heights take the poles of a sort of bier and carry her shoulder high down the road, till we met a trap. On the return journey on Sunday, they were led by Austin playing (?) on a bugle, and you have no idea how picturesque a business it was; the four half-naked bearers, the cane lounge at that height from the ground, and Belle in black and pretty pale reclining very like a dead warrior of yore. However she wasn't dead yet. All the rest of the afternoon we hung about and had consultations about the baptism. Just as we went in to dinner, I saw the moon rise accurately full, looking five times greater than nature, and the face that we try to decipher in its silver disk wearing an obliterated but benignant expression. The ball followed; blue-jackets and officers danced indiscriminately, after their pleasant fashion; and Belle, who lay in the hotel verandah, and held a sort of reception all night, had her longest visit from one of the blue-jackets, her partner in the last ball. About one on the Sunday morning all was over, and we went to bed—I, alas! only to get up again, my room being in the verandah, where a certain solemnly absurd family conclave (all drunk) was being held until (I suppose) three. By six, I was awake, and went on the verandah. On the east the dawn had broken, cold and pink and rust colour, and the marshes were all smoking whitely and blowing into the bay like smoke, but on the west, all was golden. The street was empty, and right over it hung the setting moon, accurately round, yellow as an apricot, but slumberous, with an effect of afternoon you would not believe if you had not seen it. Then followed a couple of hours on the verandah I would be glad to forget. By seven X. Y. had joined me, as drunk as they make 'em. As he sat and talked to me, he smelt of the charnel house, methought. He looked so old (he is one month my senior); he spoke so silly; his poor leg is again covered with boils, which will spell death to him; and—enough. That interview has made me a teetotaller. O, it is bad to grow old. For me, it is practically hell. I do not like the consolations of age. I was born a young man; I have continued so; and before I end, a pantaloon, a driveller—enough again. But I don't enjoy getting elderly. Belle and I got home about three in the afternoon, she having in the meantime renounced all that makes life worth living in the name of little Miss Gurr, and I seriously reflecting on renouncing the kindly bowl in earnest! Presently after arrived the news of Margery Ide (the C. J.'s daughter) being seriously ill, alarmingly ill. Fanny wanted to go down; it was a difficult choice; she was not fit for it; on the other hand (and by all accounts) the patient would die if she did not get better nursing. So we made up our own minds, and F. and I set out about dusk, came to the C. J.'s in the middle of dinner, and announced our errand. I am glad to say the C. J. received her very willingly; and I came home

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1894 ÆT. 43 again, leaving her behind, where she was certainly much wanted.

Nov. 4th.—You ask about *St. Ives.* No, there is no Burford Bridge in it, and no Boney. He *is* a squire of dames, and there are petticoats in the story, and damned bad ones too, and it is of a tolerable length, a hundred thousand, I believe, at least. Also, since you are curious on the point, St. Ives learned his English from a Mr. Vicary, an English lawyer, a prisoner of France. He must have had a fine gift of languages!

Things are going on here in their usual gently disheartening gait. The Treaty Officials are both good fellows whom I can't help liking, but who will never make a hand of Samoa.—Yours ever, R. L. STEVENSON.

TO PROFESSOR MEIKLEJOHN

Congratulating an old friend of Savile Club days (see above, p. 135) on his sailor son.

VAILIMA, SAMOA, *Nov. 6th, 1894.*

MY DEAR MEIKLEJOHN,—Greeting! This is but a word to say how much we felicitate ourselves on having made the acquaintance of Hughie. He is having a famous good chance on board the *Curaçoa*, which is the best ship I have ever seen. And as for himself, he is a most engaging boy, of whom you may very well be proud, and I have no mortal manner of doubt but what you are. He comes up here very often, where he is a great favourite with my ladies, and sings me "the melancholy airs of my native land" with much acceptancy. His name has recently become changed in Vailima. Beginning with the courteous "Mr. Meiklejohn," it shaded off into the familiar "Hughie," and finally degenerated into "the Whitrett."[1] I hear good reports of him aboard and ashore, and I scarce need to add my own testimony. 1894 ÆT. 43

Hughie tells me you have gone into the publishing business, whereat I was much shocked. My own affairs with publishers are now in the most flourishing state, owing to my ingenuity in leaving them to be dealt with by a Scotch Writer to the Signet. It has produced revolutions in the book trade and my banking account. I tackled the Whitrett severely on a grammar you had published, which I had not seen and condemned out of hand and in the broadest Lallan. I even condescended on the part of that grammar which I thought to be the worst and condemned your presentation of the English verb unmercifully. It occurs to me, since you are a publisher, that the least thing you could do would be to send me a copy of that grammar to correct my estimate. But I fear I am talking too long to one of the enemy. I begin to hear in fancy the voice of Meiklejohn upraised in the Savile Club: "no quarter to publishers!" So I will ask you to present my compliments to Mrs. Meiklejohn upon her son, and to accept for yourself the warmest reminiscences of auld lang syne.—Yours sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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[1] Whitrett or Whitrack is Scots for a weasel: why applied to Mr. Meiklejohn I do not know.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

CONTAINING PORTIONS OMITTED FROM THE LETTERS AS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED (THISTLE EDITION, VOLS. XXIII, XXIV AND XVII), AND NOW (1911) INSERTED BY SIR SIDNEY COLVIN IN HIS REVISION FOR A NEW EDITION; ALSO NEW EDITORIAL MATTER SERVING TO ELUCIDATE POINTS IN THE TEXT

LETTERS IN VOL. XXIII

Page 20. The Macdonald father and son mentioned in the letter to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson were engineers attached to the Stevenson firm and in charge of the harbour works.

Page 22. Letter to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson. The family whose name is abbreviated to "R." in this letter is that of Sheriff Russel. The tombstone of Miss Sara Russel is to be seen in Wick cemetery. The "M——" in second from last line, page 22, stands for Macdonald. The "Mrs. S." mentioned on page 23 is Mrs. Sutherland. Stevenson lodged during his stay at Wick in a private hotel on the Harbour Brae, kept by a Mr. Sutherland. (See a paper on "R. L. Stevenson in Wick," by Margaret H. Roberton, in *Magazine of Wick Literary Society*, Christmas, 1903.)

Page 53. Letter to Mrs. Sitwell. The paper on *Roads* herein mentioned had been planned during walks at Cockfield; was offered to and rejected by the *Saturday Review* and ultimately accepted by Mr. Hamerton for the *Portfolio;* and was the first regular or paid contribution of Stevenson to periodical literature.

Page 55. After paragraph ending "wide, empty floor," occurs the following paragraph :

You would require to know, what only I can ever know, many grim and many maudlin passages out of my past life to feel how great a change has been made for me by this past summer. Let me be ever so poor and thread-paper a soul, I am going to try for the best.

Page 58. Conclude the paragraph now ending "round the cape," with the sentence,

I am glad to say that the peace of the day and scenery was not marred by any unpleasantness between us two.

Page 58. After the paragraph ending "write the history fairly," read as follows:

Sunday.—It has rained and blown chilly out of the East all day. This was my first visit to church since the last Sunday at Cockfield. I was alone, and read the minor prophets and thought of the past all the time; a sentimental Calvinist preached—a very odd animal, as you may fancy—and to him I did not attend very closely. All afternoon I worked until half-past four, when I went out, under an umbrella, and cruised about the empty, wet, glimmering streets until near dinner time.

Page 62. Conclude the paragraph ending "Dumfries. . . ." with the sentence,

But the walk came sadly to grief as a pleasure excursion before our return. . . .

Page 62. At end of letter, after "loops of the stream," read as follows:

By good fortune, too, it was a dead calm between my father and me. Do you know, I find these rows harder on me than ever. I get a funny swimming in the head when they come on that I had not before—and the like when I think of them.

Page 97, line 2 from foot. Before "poet who writes" read, "a sort of."

Page 104. "Henley's hospital verses," mentioned in line 11 from the foot, had been printed by Mr. Leslie Stephen in the *Cornhill.*

Page 107. At close of paragraph ending "wine to me" read as follows:

He plainly has been little in the country before. Imagine this: I always stopped him on the Bridges to let him enjoy the great *cry* of green that goes up to Heaven out of the river beds, and he asked (more than once) "What noise is that?" — "The water." — "O!" almost incredulously; and then quite a long while after: "Do you know the noise of the water astonished me very much?" I was much struck by his putting the question *twice;* I have lost the sense of wonder of course; but there must be something to wonder at, for Henley has eyes and ears and an immortal soul of his own.

Page 133. The letter to Mrs. Sitwell began with the following sentences:

Well, here I am at last; it is a Sunday, blowing hard, with a grey sky with the leaves flying; and I have nothing to say. I ought to have no doubt; since it's so long since last I wrote; but there are times when people's lives stand still. If you were to ask a squirrel in a mechanical cage for his autobiography, it would not be very gay. Every spin may be amusing in itself, but is mighty like the last; you see I compare myself to a light-hearted animal; and indeed I have been in a very good humour. For the weather has been passable; I have taken a deal of exercise, and done some work. But, etc.

The "*Basin*" mentioned in line 6 of this letter was Thomas Basin or Bazin, the historian of Charles VIII and Louis XI.

Pages 137, 138. Neither "The Stepfather's Story" nor the "St. Michael's Mounts" essay, mentioned in this letter to Mrs. Sitwell, ever, to the editor's knowledge, came into being.

Page 156, line 3. "Meredith's story" is probably the *Tragic Comedians.*

Page 157, line 2 of letter to Sidney Colvin. "Rembrandt" refers to an article in the *Edinburgh Review.*

Page 158, line 2. After "staying with Morley," read:

has been cracking me up, he writes, to that literary Robespierre; and he (the L. R.) is about, it is believed, etc.

Page 167. After paragraph ending "Scene closes," occurs the following concluding paragraph:

I am not beaten yet, though disappointed. If I am, it's for good this time; you know what "for good" means in my vocabulary— something inside of 12 months perhaps; but who knows? At least, if I fail in my great purpose, I shall see some wild life in the West and visit both Florida and Labrador ere I return. But I don't yet know if I have the courage to stick to life without it. Man, I was sick, sick, sick of this last year.

Page 176. The story spoken of in the letter to W. E. Henley and the following letters as *A Vendetta in the West* was three parts written and then given up and destroyed. The *P. M. G.* in line 6 of letter to Henley stands for *Pall Mall Gazette.*

Page 182, line 11. The copy of the Monterey paper here mentioned never came to hand, nor have the contributions of R. L. S. to that journal ever been traced.

Page 187, line 13 from foot. The *Spectator* referred to is Addison's.

Page 194. The essays mentioned in this letter to W. E. Henley on Benjamin Franklin and William Penn were projects long cherished but in the end abandoned : *The Forest State* came to maturity three years later as *Prince Otto.*

Page 196, line 5. "Madame Z." is Madame Zassetsky.

Page 220, line 10. The words "a poetical young lady" refer to Miss Anne Killigrew.

Page 238. Of the set of tales mentioned in the letter to Sidney Colvin "Thrawn Janet" and "The Body Snatchers" were the only two completed under their original titles. "The Wreck of the *Susanna*" contained, the editor believes, the germs of "The Merry Men."

Page 245, line 4. Mr. Hamerton had been an unsuccessful candidate for the Professorship of Fine Art at Edinburgh University.

Page 252. Dr. Japp was known in literature at this time and for some time afterwards under his pseudonym of "H. A. Page." Later, under his own name, he was the biographer of Stevenson.

Page 277. Letter to Dr. Japp, line 5. The words "the enclosed" refer to a packet of the Davos Press cuts.

Page 309, line 12. "Bimini" is the name of the Delectable Land in one of Heine's *Lieder.*

Page 389. The letter to Professor Lewis Campbell was in reply to a gift of books, including the correspondent's well-known translation of Sophocles.

Page 399. The controversy mentioned in this letter to Miss Ferrier had been one in which Mr. Samuel Smiles and others had taken part, concerning the rival claims of Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of R. L. S., and John Rennie to have been the chief engineers of the Bell Rock Lighthouse (see *A Family of Engineers*, chap. iii).

In line 5, after the words "a very one-sided affair," read:

The man I attacked cried "Boo-hoo!" and referred me to his big brother. And the big brother refused to move. So I slept, etc.

Page 409. The references in the letter to Sidney Colvin were caused by the fact that Stevenson had begun with great eagerness to prepare material for a volume on the Duke of Wellington for the series of *English Worthies* published by Messrs. Longman and edited by Mr. Andrew Lang; but beyond preparation the scheme never went.

Page 412, last line of letter which ends there. After "help! help!" read:

I am going to try Happy-and-Glorious-long-to-reign-over-us. H.M. must remember things: and it is my belief, if my letter could be discreetly introduced, she would like to tell them. So I jest, when I don't address my mind to it: when I do, shall I be smit louting to my knee, as before the G. O. M.? Problème!—Yours ever, R. L. S.

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Page 19. At the time of the writing of the letter to Thomas Stevenson, January, 1886, *Kidnapped* had just been taken up again. Stevenson explains the course of the story to his father, who had taken the deepest interest in it since they visited together the scene of the Appin murder.

Page 27. This letter to Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin is the first showing Stevenson's new interest in the technicalities of music.

Page 55, line 3. At beginning of paragraph, before "I am splendid," read:

Fanny is pretty peepy;

Page 70, line 2 from foot. After the first sentence of letter to Sidney Colvin, read:

Inimitable is the only word that I can apply to our fellow-voyagers, whom a categorist, possibly premature, has been already led to divide into two classes—the better sort consisting of the baser kind of Bagman, and the worser of undisguised Beasts of the Field. The berths, etc.

Page 75, line 3. After "my sculptor," read:

I withdraw calling him handsome; he is not quite that, his eyes are too near together; he is only remarkable looking, and like an Italian cinque-cento medallion; I have begged, etc.

Page 76, line 3. Substitute for second word, "they," a dash.

Page 86. The letter to E. L. Burlingame is the first of many, increasing in friendliness as the correspondence goes on, to the editor of *Scribner's Magazine.*

Page 109. After the signature to letter ending at top of page, by way of postscript read:

1 part Charles Reade; 1 part Henry James or some kindred author badly assimilated; ½ part Disraeli (perhaps unconscious); 1½ parts struggling, over-laid original talent; 1 part blooming, gaseous folly. That is the equation as it stands. What it may be, I don't know, nor any other man. *Vixere fortes*—O, let him remember that—let him beware of

his damned century; his gifts of insane chivalry and animated narration are just those that might be slain and thrown out like an untimely birth by the Daemon of the epoch. And if he only knew how I have adored the chivalry! Bashville! — *O Bashville! j'en chortle* (which is fairly polyglot). R. L. S.

Page 115, line 6 of letter to Henry James. For "I will try to write," read:

I will try to write; and yet (do you understand me?) there is something in that potent, *genialisch* affection that puts one on the strain even to address him in a letter. He is not an easy man to be yourself with; there is so much of him, and the veracity and the high athletic intellectual humbug are so intermixed.[1] I read, etc.

Line 12 of same letter. After "*bildend* sketch," read:

(I wonder whence comes this flood of German — I haven't opened a German book since I teethed.) My novel, etc.

Page 137. The signature used at foot of first letter and occasionally elsewhere, "The Old Man Virulent," alludes to the fits of uncontrollable anger to which he was often in youth, but by this time hardly ever, subject: fits occasioned sometimes by instances of official stolidity or impertinence or what he took for such, more often by acts savouring of cruelty, meanness, or injustice.

Page 223. The idea discussed in the letter to E. L. Burlingame of a further series of essays to be contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* was never carried out.

Page 234, line 2 of letter to Henry James. "The *Bête Humaine*" refers to Émile Zola's work of that name.

Page 240. After first paragraph of letter to Mrs. Charles Fairchild, ending "whatever it is like," read as follows:

. . . It is always harshness that one regrets. . . . I regret also my letter to Dr. Hyde. Yes, I do; I think it was barbarously harsh; if I did it now, I would defend Damien no less well, and give less pain to those who are alive. These promptings of good-humour are not all sound; the three times three, cheer boys, cheer, and general amiability business rests on a sneaking love of popularity, the most insidious enemy of virtue. On the whole, it was virtuous to defend Damien; but it was harsh to strike so hard at Dr. Hyde. When I wrote the letter, I believed he would bring an action, in which case I knew I could be beggared. And as yet there has come no action; the injured Doctor has contented himself up to now with the (truly innocuous) vengeance of calling me a "Bohemian Crank," and I have deeply wounded one of his colleagues whom I esteemed and liked.

---

[1] Alluding to a kind of lofty posturing way of George Meredith's in mind and speech, quite different from any real insincerity.

Well, such is life. You are quite right; etc.

Page 249. The opening sentences of the letter to E. L. Burlingame refer to *The Wrecker*, and particularly to a suggestion of Mr. Colvin's concerning the relation of the main narrative to the prologue.

Page 258. At end of letter, after signature "A. Stewart," etc., read:

To Mr. M'Ilvaine,
Gentleman Private in a foot regiment,
under cover to Mr. Coupling.

He has read me some of your Barrack Room Ballants, which are not of so noble a strain as some of mine in the Gaelic, but I could set some of them to the pipes if this rencounter goes as it 's to be desired. Let 's first, as I understand you to move, do each other this rational courtesy; and if either will survive, we may grow better acquaint. For your tastes for what 's martial and for poetry agree with mine. A. S.

Page 261. Letter to Charles Baxter. Stevenson had been indignant at the neglect of an old friend at Edinburgh, who had received kindness from his mother, to call on her after her return from her wanderings in the Pacific.

Page 271. The "S." in the letter to Miss Rawlinson stands for Mr. Alfred Spender, the name of Miss Rawlinson's fiancé.

Page 277. This letter to W. Craibe Angus refers to the Burns Exhibition and to Mr. Angus's request for an autograph in a special copy of *The Jolly Beggars.*

Page 288. The letter "To Ned Orr" should be "To Fred Orr."

Page 299, last line. "*Aladdin*" refers to the story by Howard Pyle.

Page 307, line 12. The dash after " How poorly " stands for " Kipling."

Page 321, line 4 from foot. The allusion " a Pure Woman " is to *Tess*, a book Stevenson did not like.

Page 324, line 20. For " Buckland " read " Burn."

Page 357, line 4 from foot. After "*first part of your plans*," read:

A fortnight, even of Vailima diet, could kill nobody.

Page 380, line 16. For " refade " read " Epode." In line 2 from foot, for " characterishing buik-thank " read " characteristic pick-thank."

Page 402, line 14. For " *Westminster* on St. James," read " *Westminster* or *St. James's*."

Page 421, line 6. For "*Adler*" read " Falke."

Page 431, line 13. " matter of the book " refers to *The Wrecker*.

LETTERS IN VOLUME XVII
[VAILIMA LETTERS]

Page 27, line 15. "Dr. D." is Dr. Davis.

Page 40. In this letter the Swedish Chief Justice of Samoa, Mr. Conrad Cedercrantz, first makes his appearance. The "G." mentioned in line 4 from foot is Mr. Gurr.

Page 60. This letter announces (1) the arrival of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson from Sydney, to take up her abode in her son's island home now that the conditions of life there had been made fairly comfortable; and (2) the receipt of a letter from Mr. Colvin expressing the disappointment felt by Stevenson's friends at home at the impersonal and even tedious character of some portions of the South Sea Letters that had reached them. As a corrective of this opinion, it may perhaps be mentioned here that there is a certain many-voyaged master-mariner as well as master-writer — no less a person than Mr. Joseph Conrad — who does not at all share it, and prefers *In the South Seas* to *Treasure Island.*

Page 65, line 2 from end. The "pictures" refer to portraits of Mr. Colvin for which Stevenson had asked.

Page 66, line 8. The "artist" was Miss Fanny Macpherson, now Lady Holroyd.

Page 68, line 5 from foot. "Mrs. S." was Mrs. Sitwell.

Page 84. For "G." in this letter read Gurr, for "D." read Dunnet, and for "M." read Moors.

Page 91, line 19. For "G." read Gurr.

Page 116. The South Sea novel, *Sophia Scarlet*, mentioned in this letter, never got beyond the rough draft of an opening chapter or two.

Page 121, lines 15–16. After "with neatness and despatch," read:

As we got down to town, we met the mother and daughter of my friend ———, bathed in tears; they had left the house over a row, which I have not time or spirits to describe. This matter dashed me a good deal, and the first decent-looking day I mounted and set off to see if I could not patch things up. Half-way down it came on to rain tropic style, and I came back from my second outing drenched like a drowned man — I was literally blinded as I came back among these sheets of water; and the consequence was I was laid down with diarrhœa and threatenings of Samoa colic for the inside of another week. Meanwhile up came Laulii,[1] in whose house Mrs. and Miss ——— have taken refuge. One of Mrs. ———'s grievances is that her son has married one of these "pork-eaters and cannibals." (As a matter of fact there is no memory of cannibalism in Samoa.) And a strange thing it was to hear the "cannibal" Laulii describe her sorrows. She is singularly pretty and sweet, her training reflects wonderful credit on her husband; and when she began to describe to us — to act to us, in the tone of an actress walking through a rehearsal — the whole bearing of her angry guests; indicating the really tragic notes when they came in, so that Fanny and I were ashamed to laugh, and touching off the merely ludicrous with infinite tact and sly humour; showing, in fact, in her whole picture of a couple of irate barbarian women, the whole play and sympathy of what we call the civilised mind; the contrast was seizing. I speak with feeling. To-day again, being the first day humanly possible for me, I went down to Apia with Fanny, and between two and three hours did I argue with that old woman — not immovable, would she had been! but with a mechanical mind like a piece of a musical snuff-box, that returned always to the same starting-point; not altogether base, for she was long-suffering with me and professed even gratitude, and was just (in a sense) to her son, and showed here and there moments of genuine and not undignified emotion; but O! on the other side, what lapses — what a mechanical movement of the brain, what occasional trap-door devils of meanness, what a wooden front of pride! I came out damped and saddened and (to say truth) a trifle sick. My wife had better luck with the daughter; but O, it was a weary business!

To add to my grief — but that 's politics. Before I sleep to-night I have a confession to make. When I, etc.

Page 173. After paragraph beginning "We had a bowl of Punch," read:

By the time you receive this, my Samoan book will I suppose be out and the worst known. If I am burned in effigy for it no more need be said; if on the other hand I get off cheap with the authorities, this is to say that, supposing a vacancy to occur, I would condescend to accept the office of H.B.M.'s consul with parts, pendicles and appurtenances. There is a very little work to do except some little entertaining, to which I am bound to say my family and in particular the amanuensis who now guides the pen look forward with delight; I with manly resignation. The real reasons for the step would be three: 1st, possibility of being able to do some good, or at least certainty of not being obliged to stand always looking on helplessly at what is bad: 2nd, larks for the family: 3rd, and perhaps not altogether least, a house in town and a boat and a boat's crew.[1]

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[1] The native wife of a carpenter in Apia.

But I find I have left out another reason: 4th, growing desire on the part of the old man virulent for anything in the nature of a salary — years seem to invest that idea with new beauty.

I sometimes sit and yearn, etc.

Page 174. This letter consists of scraps merely, taken from a letter almost entirely occupied with private family matters.

Page 184, line 16. After "the Jersey party," read:

Leigh is very amusing in his way. Lady Margaret is a charming girl. And Lady Jersey is in all ways admirable, so unfussy, so plucky, so very kind and gracious. My boy Henry, etc.

Page 187, line 15. After "penitent, I think," read:

As I sat and looked at him, I knew from my inside the biggest truth in life: there is only one thing that we cannot forgive, and that is ugliness — *our* ugliness. There is no ugliness, no beauty only that which makes me (*ipse*) sicken or rejoice. And poor C. makes me sicken. Yet, according to canons, he is not amiss. Home, by buggy, etc.

Page 196. This letter contains the first announcement of the scheme of *Weir of Hermiston.*

Page 204, line 3. After "jolly well right . . ." read:

This is a strange life I live, always on the brink of deportation, men's lives in the scale — and, well, you know my character: if I were to pretend to you that I was not amused, you would justly scorn me. The new house, etc.

---

[1] This about the consulship was only a passing notion on the part of R. L. S. No vacancy occurred, and in his correspondence he does not recur to the subject.

Page 221, line 16. After "with the tailie," read:

One thing is sure, there has been no such drawing of Scots character since Scott; and even he never drew a full length like Davie, with his shrewdness and simplicity, and stockishness and charm. Yet, you 'll see, the public won't want it; they want more Alan! Well, they can't get it. And readers of *Tess* can have no use for my David, and his innocent but real love affairs.

I found my fame, etc.

Page 224, line 16. After "*bottes de ma grandmère*," read:

qui étaient à revers.

Page 232, line 3. After "Revelations," read:

Grigsby! what a lark! And how, etc.

Page 240. At close of paragraph ending "from *Le Temps*," read:

Talking of which, ain't it manners in France to acknowledge a dedication? I have never heard a word from Le Sieur Bourget.

Page 246. After paragraph ending "lit a candle at!" read:

Do you appreciate the height and depth of my temptation? that I have about nine miles to ride, and I can become a general officer? and to-night I might seize Mulinuu and have the C. J. under arrest? And yet I stay here! It seems incredible, so huge is the empire of prudence and the second thought.

Page 273. This letter recounts a scene of gratitude for bounty shown by Stevenson to the prisoners in Apia gaol.

Page 300. At close of paragraph ending "further along the coast," read:

One delicious circumstance must not be forgotten. Our blessed President of the Council — a kind of hoary-headed urchin, with the dim, timid eyes of extreme childhood and a kind of beautiful simplicity that endears him to me beyond words — has taken the head of the army — honour to him for it, for his place is really there — and gone up the coast in the congenial company of his housekeeper, a woman coming on for sixty with whom he takes his walks abroad in the morning in his shirt-sleeves, whom he reads to at night (in a kind of Popular History of Germany) in the silence of the Presidential mansion, and with whom (and a couple of camp stools) he walked out last Sunday to behold the paper-chase. I cannot tell you how taken I am with this exploit of the President's and the housekeeper's. It is like Don Quixote, but infinitely superior. If I could only do it without offence, what a subject it would make!

To-morrow morning early, etc.

Page 309, line 16 from foot. After "making an income," read:

' for my family. That is rightly the root and ground of my ill. The jingling, tingling, damned mint sauce is the trouble always; and if I could find a place, etc.

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